



HIGH PRIESTHOOD AND SACRIFICE

AN EXPOSITION OF THE
EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

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LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

91 AND 93 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK
LONDON, BOMBAY, AND CALCUTTA

1908

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The Plimpton Press Norwood Mass. U.S.A.

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HIGH PRIESTHOOD AND SACRIFICE

I

HUMAN DESTINY THROUGH DEATH

Hebrews 1-2

WE have our religion through the medium of languages that have been long dead, and that present tendencies in education threaten to render more and more dead to us. Along with the languages, there is a growing disposition to relegate the ideas, the entire symbolic expression and form, of Christianity to the past. The modern world calls for modern modes of thought and modern forms of speech. We have to meet that demand and be able to answer and satisfy whatever of reason or truth there is in it.

Revelation, if it was to come at all, had to come at a time, and in the ideas and language of the time. All that was possible in mitigation of that inevitable disadvantage was that it should come at the best time; — and the best time would be the one whose ideas and language would be, not only the most universal possible in themselves, but also the most convertible into the thought and speech of all other times. From the Hebrew into the Greek, and thence into all succeeding forms of knowledge and expression among men — that, in all the long history of things as they have been,

was the actual, as it cannot but seem to us the best, mode for the entrance of the things of God into the affairs of the world.

The time will never come when the Christian Church can surrender or neglect the Hebrew and Greek sources of its inspiration and life. And the world itself will be the richer and better if it will help us not to do so; if in all the channels and courses of higher education it will multiply the facilities and help us to magnify the importance of these best means to its own highest culture. There are two tasks before us as students and teachers of Christianity. The first is to know and understand our sources. To begin with, we must know our Old Testament as we have never known it before, if we are to take part in the new interpretation of our New Testament that the times demand. For each time must have its own living interpretation, since the interpretation cannot but be, in half measure at least, relative to the time. If the divine part in it is fixed, the human is progressive and changing just in so far as it is living.

All science of life now is a science of beginnings and of growth, or of evolution. The New Testament as absolutely transcends the Old as it fulfils it; but on the other hand, it is as actually the culmination and completion of the Old Testament as it transcends it. The thought, the language, the life of Christianity are from the very beginning Hebrew, transformed and as far as possible universalized by transition through Greek thought and speech. All this history has its mean-

ing, and enters largely into the meaning and form of Christianity as we have it. But it brings with it also its embarrassments. The most immediate consequence comes to us in the manifest fact that we are attempting to address the world to-day, in the matter of its profoundest interest, in terms of the world two thousand years ago. We have first to know what those terms meant then, and to prove that all they meant then they mean now, and mean for all men in all time. Are our Bible and our Creeds to be recognized by us as antiquated? Are the Hebrew phrases and terms of priesthood and sacrifice, and the Greek or Gentile application of them to the Cross of Christ, waxed old and ready to vanish away? Forever no! -- but if not, then we must take measures to preserve them, and the only way to preserve them is to make them as living to-day, as much part of our thought and our speech and our life now, as they were two thousand years ago.

In order to do that, we must cease to treat the phraseology, the forms, definitions, and dogmas of Christianity as sacred relics, too sacred to be handled. We must take them out of their napkins, strip them of their ceremonies, and turn them into current coin. We must let them do business in the life that is living now, and take part in the thought and feeling and activity of the men of the world of to-day. I propose to do something like this with the Gospel in its most primitive or Hebrew form, in the form in which it was actually commended to the traditional sympathies and understanding of the Hebrews themselves, in the Epistle to

the Hebrews. I propose to take those most ancient forms or figures of priesthood, high priesthood, and sacrifice, and vindicate their eternal, unchangeable truth and validity, their right and business to be as much and as necessary part of our thought, our life, and our speech to-day as they have been in all times and all places of the world from the beginning. I propose, however, to do that by handling them freely, by translating them as completely as I can into the current terms of our own thought and speech and life.

The Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the question of the nature and person of our Lord, is not its direct aim or subject-matter. It is incidental, as we shall see, to a more limited and definite enquiry or exposition. Yet there is no part of the New Testament more livingly and consciously Christological, not only in its presuppositions but in its positive statements. According to it the place and part of Jesus Christ in the world is an eternal and universal one. His function is not only human but cosmical, and not only cosmical but divine. He is equally on one side identified with, and on the other distinguished from — man, creation, and God. He is the unity of them all, while not effacing in Himself but rather maintaining the distinctions of them each. He is at once God in creation and creation in God; equally God in man and man in God. He is practically the same in the independent conceptions of St. Paul, St. John, and the Writer to the Hebrews: the Logos of God, who is not only God in all

things, but no less all things in God. I lay stress upon this eternal and essential two-sidedness of the nature and person of our Lord because it is of importance in our exposition. Jesus Christ did not more come into this world than He was always in it; He was at no single point more creative cause *ab extra* than He was at every point creative principle *ab intra*. That with which Christianity identifies Jesus Christ eternally and essentially and inseparably is not only God but creation and ourselves. He is the meaning, reason, truth of all; and not only the truth transcendental or outside, as a pattern, but the truth immanent, within, as a principle and a process.

Our Epistle expresses this universal relation of our Lord by designating Him as at once final and first cause of all things: "Whom God appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds." (Ch. I. 2.) The heir of all things is He in whom all things terminate, have their fulfilment and come to their natural or determined end. In Jesus Christ God is fulfilled in creation and in man; creation is fulfilled in man and in God; man is fulfilled in God and in nature or creation. The final cause, the pre-determined, determined, in the highest sense natural, reason, meaning, or end of all existence is accomplished. Final cause is the only real or actual first cause. The end determines all the means, sets in motion all the processes. He who is end of all things is for that reason author or cause of all things. The worlds exist by Christ as they exist for Him. Jesus Christ is not

only the sole emanation or self-expression of or from God, but He is also that whole expression, the perfect impress or express of God, in all else. (Ch. I. 3.)

It is, however, only one part of this universal process that is traced for us by this Epistle, and that constitutes its immediate and detailed subject-matter. The Epistle is a description of how Jesus Christ is author and finisher, cause, process, and conclusion of human redemption and completion. The cosmical bearing or significance of the Incarnation is dropped, and attention is concentrated upon the act or process by which God and man become one in Jesus Christ. It might be said that the physical or metaphysical side of the question of a possible or actual becoming one of God and man is equally left out of consideration, and attention wholly concentrated upon the process of the spiritual and moral unification. This is indicated by the single phrase in which the writer expresses the entire act and function of the Incarnation: "When He had made purification of sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Ch. I. 3.) God and man are one in Christ not only as a physical or metaphysical fact but by the supremest of spiritual and moral acts.

We may take an even further step, and say that in our Epistle attention is directed to that act less as an act of God in man than as an act of man in God. We have only to remember that the entire activity of man in God is itself the act of God in man; but we can see and construe God's part, the cause, only

in man's part, the effect. We can see God in the man no otherwise than in that which is the act and activity of the man himself. We can see God even in Jesus Christ only in what Christ is and does as man. God does not manifest Himself outside of that in which He designs to manifest Himself. Even our Lord's supernatural knowledge and miraculous powers as exhibited on earth were not without but within the limits of His humanity. And so His entire act of uniting us with God, redeeming us from sin, and raising us from death — from the side visible to us or construable by us — was a perfect act, the perfect act, of humanity in His person.

It is in keeping with this that our Lord's even cosmical priority or supremacy passes quickly, in the Epistle, into man's priority or supremacy. He is higher than the angels as the revelation and representative of man, and because man is in himself, in nature and destiny, higher than the angels. What are the angels but ministering spirits, servants in God's house that wait upon the true heir? For not unto angels did He subject the world to come, but unto man, — man who, now lower than the angels, is destined by his nature, which means predestined by God, to be higher than they, to be even the head and heir of the whole creation, he in whom God is Himself to be fulfilled in the creature, and the creature to become one with God. We see not yet this destiny fulfilled in man, but we do see it fulfilled in the Man who is the Head, and in whom (alone as yet) humanity has come into its inheritance.

Our Lord, however, is higher than the angels not only as Himself man but in His official relation to men. He too is Servant, but while they minister in the house and to the heirs, He administers and is Himself both the house and the inheritance. His transcendence is never lost or forgotten in His immanence. Whether the Writer to the Hebrews has in mind the relation of the Lord to the creation or to the Church, it is always a question with him whether He belongs within it or without. The angels belong wholly within the creation, of course. But does He belong within it, with the creature, or without it, with the Creator? The answer is, both; — but so both, that the question is constantly arising, which? So again, the Lord as servant of the Church is like Moses. But, only like Moses? No; for while Moses is servant wholly within the Church, our Lord is servant not only, even more than he, within, but in a sense infinitely transcending him without and from above the Church. Jesus was faithful as was Moses in all his house. But He is counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by so much as he that built the house hath more honour than the house. Every house, whether it be the Cosmos or the Church, is builded by some one. He that built them both, He that built all things, is — God; is to be classed not with the building or the built but the Builder. Moses was faithful in his house as a servant, but Christ as a Son, over His house; whose house are we. This kind of both comparison and contrast runs through the whole Epistle. God speaks to us in Christ not

through a prophet only, but in a son. The prophet transmits only one's thought or message, the son transmits one's self, one's nature and life. Joshua could lead the people of God into only an earthly rest, Jesus into a heavenly and an eternal one. Aaron and his successors could shed the blood of only a carnal or representative cleansing; Jesus Christ alone could die the death which is the death of sin because it is the life of God.

That Jesus Christ, nevertheless, can be and is construed for us only in terms of man and man's activity is apparent from the beginning of our Epistle in the very tenses of the verbs by which He is described. It is all the language, not of timeless being but of temporal becoming, not of divine act or fact but of human process. Being gives place to becoming, and aorists and perfects take the place of presents and imperfects, from the moment of the Incarnation. When He had made purgation of sins, He took His seat on the right hand of the majesty on high; having become by so much better than the angels, as He hath inherited a more excellent name than they. Not merely by the fact of its purification, rather by the act of its having made for itself purification from sins, humanity in the person of its head was exalted to the right hand of God. In that act and fact it became higher or better than the angels by realizing, actualizing the nature potential in itself, and so inheriting, coming into mature possession and exercise of, the name and status of sons of God.

For sonship, in distinction from mere extraction or

derivation, is distinctly not a physical but a spiritual dependence and relation. We can inherit it only as by personal act of our own we ourselves realize and fulfil it. Although the heir was from the beginning a son potentially, by destination of nature or predestination of God, yet actually he was not a son but only a servant until the divine spirit of conscious and accomplished sonship within him had made not merely his nature but himself, by his own act in the nature, son of God. Jesus Christ *became* higher than the angels, He brought humanity in His person into the inheritance, into the accomplished and complete possession and exercise of the nature in which it is in itself higher than the angels. For man is the end of creation, he is he in whom God reproduces Himself, His Spirit, His character, His life. We are in Christ become partakers of the divine nature not only in *posse* but in *esse*.

Jesus Christ, and humanity in His person, became son of God in a definite moment and by a definite act. Unto which of the angels said He at any time, 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?' It was in the day of the Resurrection, in that moment of His and our complete death to sin and life to God, that we became in Jesus Christ sons of God, no longer *potentiâ* only, but *actu*. So St. Paul says of our Lord that He was determined, accomplished, and instated, son of God in power, according to the spirit of holiness, from or out of the resurrection from the dead.

And again — quotes our Epistle — I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to me a Son; better, I will

become to Him Father, and He shall become to me Son. Humanity, creation, has realized its meaning and come to its end, when God has come to His fatherhood in it, and it has come to its sonship in Him. Not yet do we see this in creation or in humanity, but we see it accomplished and complete in Him who is their head, and in whom they shall come into their inheritance.

Our author quotes another passage from Hebrew scriptures to express the truth that when again in final triumph, and in the restitution of all things, the First-born of humanity and of creation into the accomplished sonship of God shall return to be glorified in His completed work, the angels of God shall know and worship Him. The angels, according to his conception, are the agents and instruments of God in the order of natural creation; the Son is author and finisher of the spiritual and moral order of the universe. It is as filled with the spirit of holiness, founder and head of a kingdom of divine righteousness and life, that He is described as anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows.

The natural order exists for the spiritual, and is therefore temporary in itself and eternal only in it. The heavens and the earth shall perish; they all shall wax old as doth a garment; they shall be folded up as a mantle, and as a garment they shall be changed. Only that in them shall abide which is the eternal and unchangeable truth of Jesus Christ; the personal meaning and purpose of God in them; the spirit of holiness,

the kingdom of righteousness, the all-creating, all-sustaining, all-pervading love and life of God. They all shall be changed, but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail.

Finally, of which of the angels hath He said at any time, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet? His enemies are ours; all our enemies are already under His feet for us; all our enemies shall be put under His feet in us.

The exact propriety of the application of all these Old Testament ideas and quotations to the full truth of Jesus Christ, as they had long before been applied to the growing conception and expectation of the Messiah, is a matter of secondary concern. The New Testament too far transcends the possible meaning of the Old to be ever a mere interpretation of it. Even the Writer to the Hebrews is not so much trying to interpret to them their Scriptures as seeking to find in them, in their ideas and hopes and figures, warrant and expression for the transcending fact and facts of Christianity. In them the mind, the needs, the very language had been moulded and prepared for the reception of a truth infinitely greater than they themselves could have ever meant or expected.

So much of what has been so far said as needs to be carried on into the argument before us, I will briefly repeat. The Lord, in this Epistle and generally in the New Testament, spoken of as the mediator of the new covenant of grace and salvation, and here so vividly contrasted with angels, with Moses, and with the

Prophets, is, while distinguished from God (*ὁ θεός*), at the same time identified with God both in creation and in redemption in a way which infinitely differentiates Him from all creatures, and justifies the distinct characterizing of Him as God (*θεός*). He that built all things, He who is author alike of creation and of the new creation of redemption and completion, of both the world and the Church, is God. At the same time, the Lord is man, and is spoken of wholly in terms of man, in the entire process of His work for man, of His being or becoming human redemption and completion. Salvation is the act of man; and only the more so for being also in him the act of God. Salvation is an act of man, and it is a single and very definite act — the only possible act by which salvation could be wrought or in which salvation could consist.

A great deal is said against limiting possibilities with God. But is it not a contradiction of God to suppose that what He has made to consist in one thing might possibly consist in another and a different thing? If when we say that God cannot do so and so, we mean that God cannot contradict Himself or throw His own creation into confusion, then we are right in saying so. If sin is man's fall and ruin, the thing from which he needs to be saved, the cause of all his possible other ills, then there is or can be no other salvation possible for him than salvation from sin. If sin is the opposite or loss of holiness, and there is no holiness but in the mind and spirit and life of God, then there is no salvation for any creature from sin or to holiness apart

from God, or without the spirit and mind and life of God in him. If at the same time it is equally true that holiness and sin are nothing if not personal qualities and characters, and as such absolutely inseparable from, or unable to consist in anything else than, what the subject of them is in and of himself, then it follows that only the man himself can make himself either sinful or holy, and that he cannot be saved from one to the other otherwise than by an act of his own. Our wills are ours, though we know not how; and none other than we, not even He without us, can make them God's. If God without us should make our wills His own, it would not be our wills that He had made His own. Human salvation, then, is a definite act, and a definite act of our own. We can accomplish it in only one way, by only one process, and that process or way is determined and fixed by the constitution of our nature and the facts of our condition. There is nothing arbitrary in it, nor anything, we being what we are and things as they are, that could by any possibility be otherwise.

The next point or stage in our argument is a truth which underlies the whole and in fact is the essential matter for our consideration. It is the truth that there is no salvation, at least no human salvation, possible save through death. The death of Jesus Christ was no mere incident or accident of His human career. It was the essential thing in it, as what it means for us all is the essential thing in human life and destiny. There is nothing more reassuring upon the point of

the deep spiritual unity and inspiration of the New Testament than the unanimity with which its writers stand upon the supreme significance and necessity of the death of Jesus Christ. There is no Christ for any one of them save the Christ crucified, dead, and buried. The blood of Jesus Christ is the only possible seed of the Gospel or the Church. We see not yet the promise fulfilled, the inheritance attained, the enemies put under foot, all things subjected unto man, humanity sanctified and glorified through purgation from sin and at-onement with God, — we see not yet all this realized in ourselves, but we do see it all accomplished and complete in Him who, for or because of His suffering of death, was crowned with glory and honour; that by the grace of God He should taste death for every man. For it became God, there was a divine propriety, — a divine propriety because a human necessity, — it became God, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings. He was not merely the maker or creator, as one may be of a thing outside and apart from oneself, He was the author, the captain or leader, the forerunner and firstborn, the beginner and finisher, the whole process and *res ipsa*, matter itself, of the glory which was His only as theirs, and theirs as His; He was not only our saviour but our salvation.

Wherein lay the propriety and the necessity? Why is death not only a necessary constituent but the essential fact of salvation? This involves something of an investigation of the New Testament meaning and

interpretation of death. And then death appears to us in successive stages of meaning: death as a universal and imperfect incident or fact in the course of nature; death as a personal and moral act by which we transcend nature; death as a spiritual birth or new becoming of ourselves in God, because of God in ourselves. We will consider each of these in turn.

The mystery of man is the mystery of death, and the mystery of death is the mystery of man; each is interpretative and explanatory of the other. Lord, what is man, that Thou art mindful of him? Or the son of man, that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little, and for a little while, lower than the angels; Thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands; Thou didst put all things in subjection under his feet. In that He subjected all things unto him, He left nothing that is not subject unto him. We see not yet all this nature fulfilled, all this destiny accomplished, save in One, — and in Him it is all through death, by reason or means of death.

Taking death in all its meaning, as embracing all its stages in man alone, it is death which is the condition and the instrumental cause of man's superiority to the angels. That which is the badge of his weakness and perishableness is in reality the secret of his power and his permanence. The seed is a greater miracle than the diamond; the possibilities of life are more wonderful than the most enduring of mere forms; gold is a perishable thing in comparison with faith.

What is death but the power and act of becoming, of ceasing to be, and becoming other and higher than, the thing we were? The mystery of man is the power of becoming, through death, not something other than himself, but his higher self under other and higher conditions. The reason and probability of such higher conditions and life lie in the fact within him of his own perfectibility, or inherent capacity for higher and highest being or becoming. There is no limit in spirit to its power of a higher becoming; all the limits of which we are conscious in our nature or in ourselves, apart from those which we create through our neglect or abuse of our nature and ourselves, are limitations of matter or of flesh, not of spirit.

Given the necessary organs of self-activity, and there is no limit to the possibilities of human knowledge or wisdom, human holiness or righteousness or life. The limitations are in the instruments, not in the subject of the life that is truly human. There is no reason in myself at seventy or at eighty why I should cease to grow wiser or holier. I break off perforce at the end with still a consciousness and sense of the capacity and power to become infinitely wiser and holier than I am. I see in Jesus Christ a capacity in my nature as spirit to become as perfect as God is perfect. I have never more than begun to be what I could fill eternity and infinity with becoming. The infinite and eternal, the perfect and complete, are my natural inheritance. Why shall I not have a chance of being more than the imperfect being I am at death, when I know I have the

capacity and the desire to be so infinitely more perfect a being than I ever am at death? As Bishop Butler says, I know that the loss of my present powers is not the loss of my living powers. It is not I that die, but only my present powers of life. Renew those, and I shall continue to live; refine or exalt those, and I am prepared to live as much higher a life than before as my organs or conditions of life shall have been elevated and improved. This is not speculation, it is the experience of the most direct consciousness. The wiser and the better one is the more certainly does he know that he has but begun to draw upon a capacity in himself for wisdom and goodness upon which it is impossible for him to think or place any limit. The very consciousness of infinity and eternity, of perfection and completion, as qualities and laws of ourselves, is the potency and promise and prophecy of these things for us and in us. To deny them to us as an inheritance and an end is to contradict the reason and the consciousness of spirit, it is to put us to permanent spiritual confusion.

Such a divine promise to human nature and human destiny is poetically conveyed by the quotation from the Psalms in the passage before us. What is man?—temporarily so low, constituted and predestined to become so high. Is it not a living and a lasting question? What is to be the limit of his sovereignty over nature here, of his higher attainments in the realm of spirit, his higher exaltations above himself, elsewhere? The promise is that all things shall be put in subjection under his feet, that no enemy shall be left unsubdued,

no difficulty unsurmounted, no height unattained. Is it pride or presumption to take the prophecy at its word, to accept its fulfilment in Jesus Christ in all its divine realization and reality?

But death so far spoken of is only a natural change, a potentiality of higher organs and functions, a possibility of better external conditions. It is clear that the death made so much of in the Gospel of Jesus Christ involves not merely a natural but a moral change, the change not only of our powers or conditions but of ourselves. The change of ourselves is necessarily a change by ourselves. No change wrought upon us is a change of us. Personality is not passive but active, and self-active, being; we are only what we ourselves are, what we do or become or make ourselves. The death of Jesus Christ is not only something which we must suffer, it is something which we must do. Death is for us a moral opportunity, a moral requirement, a moral act. We acquire our moral, free, rational, and right personalities, we make or become ourselves, through our opportunities and acts of not being something and of being something else, of ceasing to be one thing and becoming another thing. Carry that to its extreme, and you have the supreme opportunity and the supreme act of Jesus Christ, the act in which humanity in His person wholly became its whole self; — how? why, by wholly ceasing of itself to be all that would limit or contradict itself, and fulfilling all that fulfils and constitutes itself. Such an act involves infinite effort, infinite endurance, infinite pain, infinite

energy, and it is necessarily so. It is all these in it that makes it an infinite means and opportunity, a perfect discipline and instrument of the perfect activities and qualities which alone can make us perfect persons.

Death so understood is the power not of being changed but of changing ourselves, and the perfect change which our higher and highest life involves and exacts of us can be expressed by nothing less than an absolute death of ourselves in all that mars us and an absolute new life in all that makes us. The rational, free, moral life of man is not simply to put off vice and put on virtue. To be radical and real it must be a putting off the complete man or self of vice and putting on the perfect self of virtue. All mere moral systems are not radical and real, because in the light of absolute standards they are compelled to stop infinitely short of the absolute and real requirements of human life and destiny. Christianity is nothing to us if it is only one of the systems of life and morals; if it is not the absolute morals and the absolute religion; if it does not confer upon us and does not exact of us the whole of life and the perfection of being. Jesus Christ is our righteousness from God, He is our perfection as God Himself is perfect.

If death in all its true meaning and function were only a complete and perfect moral change, it would stand to us for an impossibility. We cannot make the change in ourselves and of ourselves that the law of ourselves and of God requires. The law in requiring

of us an impossible one thing only convinces and convicts us of a hopeless other thing. In demanding of us perfection it reveals to us our infinite imperfection; in demanding life it only teaches us the meaning and brings home to us the fact of death. And yet it is impossible for the law to require of us anything less than absolute righteousness and perfect life; for nothing less is in fact the true and actual norm and condition of our spiritual being. But death is as much more than only a moral change as that is more than a mere natural change. Death is not yet its own highest self until it has become in us the effectual and effective act of our own highest selves. It is not itself until it appears in us, not merely as a moral act of ourselves but as a birth and a becoming of something other and more than ourselves, the principle and power in us of all that the law of our spirits requires, but that the self-sufficiency of our spirits could never attain.

If there were never any sin, the death of mere nature and of our individual and separate selves or selfhood would have still been a necessity. We are not constituted to become all ourselves in mere nature or in only ourselves. If we were, we should be quite other than, and infinitely short of, the beings that we actually are. We are made to be infinitely more than mere nature makes us, or than we can by possibility make ourselves. Nature was made deficient, and the will of man was made insufficient for the true nature and destiny of our spiritual manhood. Our insufficiency is our greatness, our poverty is our wealth, our dependence is our glory.

It is the infinite not-ourselves that alone can make us the infinitely more than ourselves which is our only true selves. To be ourselves, we have not only to transcend nature in ourselves, but we can do that only by transcending ourselves in God. Each lower has to die in itself and to be taken up and fulfilled in the next higher. Our dead selves are indeed the only stepping-stones to the better and the higher which is ever before us until we come to God Himself. Only that can ascend into heaven which has come down from heaven. Except God humble Himself to be born in us we can never be exalted to sit on His right hand and share His divine life. Death in the New Testament, the death of Christ, the death which we must die with Christ, is no mere death of nature, it is a death of sin; it is more than merely the death of sin, it is the death of the nature in which we cannot but sin, and of ourselves who cannot but sin in it; the birth into the nature and life of God which is the only death of sin and the only life of the spirit.

II

THE DIVINE PROPRIETY OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST

Hebrews 1-2

THE process of human salvation in Christ is exactly traced and defined in the words of our Epistle. It was proper or necessary for God, in bringing us all to glory, to perfect the author or first attainer of our salvation through sufferings, including, of course, in order to be perfect, the supreme and extreme suffering of death. "For," adds the Writer, "both He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one." Of one *what*? It may perfectly well include the meaning, of one human extraction and nature, of one human need and experience of salvation. That is all true, because our Lord was wholly one with us, not only in our common humanity but in all the trial and victory of our human life. Or it might include this meaning: our Lord and we, the sanctified and the Sanctifier, are all of God, of one Father and — through Him — of one realized and accomplished sonship to the father. This, too, is of course true, and as true as the other to the general argument we are following. But the immediate context and connection require a more particular meaning of the words. The Sanctifier and the sanctified are all

the subjects of one common process of sanctification; they all come out of the same experience of suffering; they are all sons of God out of the same baptism of blood, out of the same new birth of death to sin and life to God. As it is said of the Lord it is said of all: He was determined, or born, or became Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, of, or from, or out of resurrection from the dead. Both of the illustrations that follow bear out this interpretation.

“For which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the congregation will I sing thy praise.” The first illustration is that of a king, who, after the type of David, has fought and won his way to the throne through trials so great and experiences so deep that his final triumph and exaltation are described as a resurrection from the dead. And his resurrection and ascension are not his own only. He brings his followers, his people, with him; and in the midst of the congregation, or public assembly, unites with them as brethren in declaring the name and singing the praise of the Source of their common salvation. The incident referred to was of course the temporal experience of an earthly king. But it was an anointed, a theocratic king, a representative of God in the affairs of men. The language, too, applied to him, the extreme figures of death and resurrection, was that of simple poetical hyperbole. But the hyperboles of the flesh are the letters of the spirit; the types and shadows

of the actual are the truths and facts of the ideal and the real. The things that are imperfectly and only rhetorically true of all God's anointed before Him, are the simple truth of Him who is the Anointing as well as the Anointed.

“And again, I will put my trust in Him. And again, Behold, I and the children which God hath given me.” The second illustration is from the experience of a prophet who stands in the midst, in the heart, of the people as the symbol and medium of God's presence with them, the great truth of Immanuel. Great judgments were about to fall upon the people for their sins; they were to pass through the furnace of affliction and be consumed. But not all; there was to be a remnant saved, an election of grace. The election of grace is the election of faith. Faith is indestructible; for where faith is God is, and God cannot be destroyed. So long as the great truth of Immanuel is alive in the soul of man or people, there remains something which is imperishable, which like the gold will survive the heat of the extremest furnace. The prophet embodies that fact of faith, that truth of Immanuel. I, he says, will put my trust in Him. There is something in the exact form of expression which we can scarcely reproduce. He is speaking before, though in immediate presence of, the judgment, and he speaks prophetically: I, says he, when the judgment comes and goes, will survive it, for I shall have, I will have, trusted in Him. He identifies himself with the faith which will survive all judgments, because it is in God and God is in it.

And not only so; he will not survive alone; God will give him children of his faith; his life out of death will bring others with him. Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit. Judgment shall come, but a remnant shall return, for — Immanuel! Behold, I and the children which God hath given me.

“Because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He likewise took part in, or of, the same.” A double truth is clearly expressed. The part of Jesus Christ in our common humanity is a divine participation, a participation of God, in it. It is an act not only of literal and actual divine participation, but of divine sympathy; not only an act of divine being but an act of divine suffering with us in a common nature and under a common condition. That is the first truth, and the second is like unto it and a necessary part of it: the participation in our nature and our sufferings was as real a human participation as the subject of it was God himself. Nothing short of that is the whole mystery or the whole truth of the Incarnation.

The end and purpose of the participation was, that “through death He might bring to nought him that had the power of death; that is, the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” This brings us face to face with the whole question of the place and part of death in human experience, and of the act of Jesus Christ in reference to it, in a more profound way than we have yet considered it. The meaning

or final cause of death is to be interpreted by its normal, what we might call its successful, effects. When the seed dies and through death lives again in the much fruit it bears, it is legitimate to say that that is the meaning and truth of the death of the seed. The fact that so very many more seeds perish without living again and bearing fruit does not create a presumption on the other side, that the meaning of the death of the seed is that it should perish without resurrection. As little is the moral death which we all undergo always a death unto life. It equally may be a death unto death. Unto everlasting death? Why not, in the nature and natural operation of the thing itself? As far as we can follow them, we see men marring instead of making themselves.

St. Paul speaks of a sorrow that is unto life, a godly sorrow that worketh repentance unto salvation, a sorrow and a repentance which will never bring regret. And he speaks as though that were the final cause and function of sorrow; as our Lord Himself manifestly does when He makes sorrow one of the first conditions and constituents of divine blessedness. But St. Paul speaks also of another, and perhaps a very much more common, sort of sorrow which he calls the sorrow of the world, and which worketh death. Which of these two forms expresses the true meaning and final cause of sorrow? We all have the larger hope that in the end all sorrow, all death will lead up unto life and blessedness. But it is a hope not based upon our experience so far as it has yet gone, but upon

an instinctive and a persistent conviction that our universe is a universe of goodness, and that therefore good will *somehow* be the final goal of ill. As yet the moral arena in which we are all fighting the battle of life and determining the present direction, at least, of our destinies is not altogether a hopeful spectacle. If a man's sorrow is of the godly sort, a sorrow for the proper object, the sorrow for sin, which is the only evil; which is only a negative expression of the love and desire for holiness, which is the only good, — then sorrow in him is discharging its normal and proper function. And such a sorrow cannot go too far; it stops short of its appointed end so long as the repentance it works falls short of a repentance unto salvation, that is to say, unto the death of that from which, and the life of that to which, we would be saved. But what if our sorrow and our death are not of the thing in us that ought to die? What if we are sorrowing for and dying to the wrong things? What if our daily dying is not to the things that are not life, that are destructive of life, but to the life itself and all the things that make for life? There is a death that is the death of death unto the life of life; and there is another death which is the death of life unto the life of death; we cannot get rid of that dual character, that dual possibility in the very meaning and in the universal operation of death. There is a death which is not death but life, the very essential energy and activity of life. And there is a death which is *so* death, which is so the contradiction and extinction of all that is truly

life, that, the direct opposite of the death unto life, it is the death of life.

The truth that underlies and explains all this ambiguity in terms is the fact that spirit or personality is in its very nature a possibility of opposites: not a possibility of uniting or harmonizing the opposites, but of holding them together, of — as it were — being both, until in the all-important trial and issue of life we have decided between them which we shall be, and so have become one or the other. There is an Esau and a Jacob or Israel, contending together for inheritance and possession, in the womb of every human life. Shall it be the world or God with us; acquiescence and satisfaction with the world, or wrestling with God through the darkness of the long night of life here, until we have prevailed and He hath blessed us, until we come out no longer Jacob the supplanter but Israel the prince; or rather until we come out the true supplanter, the rightful inheritor, the spiritual man whose nature and destiny it is to succeed and displace the natural? There is a war within us unto death. There are two men within us both of whom cannot survive; one or other must die. The double question with us is, with which do we identify ourselves now, which of the two shall we wholly be in the end? The man of the flesh or the man of the spirit; Christ or self? It is only in repentance and faith, the right initial attitude towards sin and holiness, that we can say, Not I but Christ. It is only in the completion of repentance in the extinction of sin, in the completion of faith in the realization

of holiness, that the object of faith in Christ for us can become the subject of fact through Christ in us.

The New Testament, implicitly if not more distinctly, discriminates between death in its true meaning and function and death in its perversion and degradation; just as it discriminates between the world and the flesh in their truth and in their actual falsity, or what we call their fallen character and condition. Sin is the sting and poison of death, as of everything else in the nature and life of man. Satan is spoken of as having the power of death, just as he is called the prince of this world and is described as ruling in the children of disobedience. He has not the rightful power, any more than he is the rightful prince or ruler. Death in its right nature and intent is as good as the world or man as they came from the hand of God. The rightful lord of death is God, the rightful power of death is the spirit and life of God.

When death is its true self, which is life, through its being the death of everything that is counter to life, that is of all the enemies of life, as Christ's death was, then it is God who is the Lord of it, and His Spirit and life that are the power of it. If another and opposite of God is actually, not rightfully, lord of it; and if another and different spirit than His is the power and character of it, and instead of being the death of everything else unto life it is the death of life itself, then may we indeed speak of the sting and corruption of death through sin. And then indeed is death the supreme evil, a thing to be abolished,

the last enemy which shall be destroyed. If God be the Lord of death, and of death as the very act in us and the act by us of life, the act in which we die to all that is not life, who shall fear it? If God be not the Lord of death, but the devil; if the sting and poison of sin is in it; if it is the death in us of all life, and the power and life in us of all the enemies of life, of all that contradicts the truth and beauty and goodness and blessedness of life, — then may we justly fear and dread it, then are we indeed all our lifetime subject to a bondage for redemption from which we want all the power and love of God to save us — for salvation from which we have nothing else to look to but the infinite love and the perfect power of God.

Jesus Christ is that perfect love and that infinite power of God unto our salvation. The grace of the Son is the love and power of the Father incarnate; that is to say in actual operation and manifestation in the visible process of human salvation. In Him we see God saving in the actual process and in the manifest result of man saved. In Him we see not only God in man but man in God, Prince and Lord of death and life. The woman's seed has bruised the serpent's head; the seed and heir of Abraham's faith has inherited the earth. Not of angels doth He take hold, but He taketh hold of the seed of Abraham. The conquest of the world, as we are to see in the next chapter, is the conquest of faith. But there is something more to be said in completion of that part of the subject upon which we are at present.

“Wherefore it behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be (might become) a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.” *Wherefore* — that is, in recapitulation of the argument of these first two chapters which we have been considering; — the Writer proceeds to restate the matter under the figures and in the terms in which it is his purpose in the Epistle to discuss with his Hebrew compatriots the office and work of our Lord in our human salvation, Christ our High Priest and our Sacrifice. The end of both the office and the function was to make propitiation for the sins of the people. Our Author is entirely at one with St. John, St. Paul, and the mind of the whole New Testament, as regards the end and result of the Incarnation. Jesus Christ is, before anything else in our consummated salvation, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. We know that He was manifested to take away sin. The first enemy that He destroys is sin, as the last is all the accumulated consequence of sin, eternal death. In our Epistle, at the beginning the whole work of our Lord in the flesh was expressed in the words, When He had, for humanity in His person, made purification of sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

The expression “to make propitiation for sins” will be deepened and broadened in meaning through

the entire course of the argument before us. It is simply used here, without explanation or interpretation. Before coming to our Author's own exposition, let us give some preliminary reflection of our own to the use of this and kindred expressions as applied to the essential and necessary work of religion accomplished for us by Jesus Christ. The idea and truth underlying all these expressions is that of peace, peace accomplished or restored, — reconciliation, at-one-ment, propitiation, being brought near to, or back into grace and favour. The enmity of sin, the enmity which sin is and breeds, is a universal fact, if not of our nature, yet of our actual condition and of our life as it is in the flesh and in the world. It is part of the characteristic common sense or wisdom of Bishop Butler to remark, that however interesting such questions may be in the way of speculation, our real or practical business in the world is not to question why things are as they are, but, seeing that things are what they are, to ascertain what is to be done about them. Even the speculative question of the why of sin itself is, I believe, made increasingly clear to us in our increasing experience of the holiness and life of Christ. As the Devil himself, in the hands of Him who makes the wrath of angel as of man to praise Him, is converted despite himself into a ministering spirit, sent forth to minister salutary trial and discipline to those who shall be heirs of salvation; so even sin too is to be accounted one of the all things which God shall work together, or make work together, for good to them that love Him.

There is no use to stop to argue about either the fact or the meaning of sin. It is a matter of the common experience of every man who knows anything of holiness, just as no one is ignorant of the fact or meaning of vice but he who is not sufficiently morally developed to know the meaning of virtue. Both of these distinctions are indeed an evolution, as everything else is in human nature and life. St. Paul traces for us the age-long development under the law of the sense or consciousness of sin and holiness. But these are race or human growths or evolutions, which we must regard as so far accomplished. We must take humanity as it is at this present stage of its progress or development, and we have a right to say that the man who is now without the sense or consciousness of the distinction, in himself and in all others, between sin and holiness, as of that between vice and virtue, is one belated in his spiritual and moral development.

Sin then is a fact, and it is an enmity; it is in its very nature and essence an enmity — against God, because against ourselves and everything else. As love is the only actual or possible spiritual bond of perfectness, the only principle or condition of perfect personal relationship and association, and love is holiness, and love is God; so enmity or hate, in any of its varieties or gradations of form or expression, is the contradictory of love and of God, is sin, is the devil. What we are, we are in relation and association, with God, nature, and one another; what perfects this relation and asso-

ciation perfects us, and is holiness; and holiness is a spirit, it is the Spirit and nature and life of God; just as what mars the perfectness of that relation and association mars and ruins us, and is sin; and sin, too, is a spirit, the spirit and nature of him who wields the power of not life, but death. We can see then how the essence and condition of salvation is peace, reconciliation, at-one-ment; how that carries with it everything else that enters into the composition of salvation, of life and blessedness.

When we speak of peace with God we mean real peace and whole peace; we mean the removal of all that stands in the way of that peace. And all that stands in the way of it is sin. Our Lord was manifested to take away sin, and He took it away, and takes it away. God sent His Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and *περὶ ἁμαρτίας*, for or about sin. That is the one question or issue in human life and destiny: What about sin? What is to be done about it, by God and ourselves? For it lies between us and Him; between us and our holiness, our righteousness, our blessedness, our life, all of which are He and He alone. When we speak in this way of sin and the necessity, the blessedness, the salvation of its taking away, we do not, we cannot, mean anything else or less than all these things of sin itself. It is not the imputation merely, or the condemnation, or the penalty or consequences of sin from which we are thinking or talking of being saved. It is the sin itself; that is the evil from which alone is salvation, and all the salvations

short of that are only bits and parts and stages of salvation. The only conditions of a real peace are the removal of all the causes which render peace impossible, because they constitute enmity.

It would seem to follow from the above reasoning that the only way to be reconciled and at peace with God is to be purified and free from sin. Absolutely and ultimately that is so. But what is true in the end is reversed in the process. And that reversal is just the essential distinction between the method of law and works on one side and that of gospel and grace on the other. The method of law is that we are reconciled by being purified or pure, the method of grace is that we are purified through being first reconciled. But how in the nature of the thing can we be truly reconciled and at one prior to being purged of that which constitutes the enmity? It is St. Paul's great question, How can we be justified prior to being just? How can God call or accept that which is not as though it were? The real and immediate question then in the actual process of our salvation is, how shall we as sinners and despite our sin be brought into such relation and association with God as that that union and communion with Him shall constitute and effect our purification from sin? These things cannot be accomplished mechanically, or by the exercise of any kind of mere power upon us from without. They must take place in our own personal life processes, and in accordance with the laws of free spiritual and moral change within.

The process of grace briefly traced is as follows: The first step is, under the natural operation of the law without and development of the spirit within, to bring the consciousness to a sense of the fact and the nature of sin. The next is, in the inevitable struggle in the developed consciousness between sin and the awakened spirit of holiness, to develop the experience of the deficiency of nature and the insufficiency of self for the real purposes of life; and so, in the next place, the sense of need, the principle of dependence upon the one Source, the only and all sufficient Power of life. This is as far as religion before Christ could go. What Christianity has of specific and definite addition to make to all religion before it, is the actual revelation, the demonstration and manifestation of, not only a possible, but the accomplished real reconciliation of God and man for which all that went before was but the natural preparation. The reconciliation in Christ Himself is a real reconciliation, the condemnation and death in the flesh of all that separates between God and man. But the reconciliation which in Christ is fact, is in us only faith. It is faith in us, because, in the first place, we see in Christ the meaning, the reason, the truth of the thing revealed; and not only the truth, but the beauty and the good; and not only these, but the imperative obligation, the absolute necessity of it to ourselves. Jesus Christ is the inevitable end and all to every one who sees and knows Him. And Jesus Christ is God's Word not only of truth but of promise and of power, of realization and

fulfilment, of redemption and completion, to every man to whom that Word effectually utters itself. What a warning there is in that saying of our Lord, Take heed how ye hear!

This then is the status of the sinner with God: he is not holy in fact, but he is holy in faith; and his holiness in faith is God's effectual way of making him holy in fact. He is one with God, or at one with God, because all that as yet he infinitely is not, he wholly believes and loves and means; and all that he so means he is in principle, and will be in effect. The present relation of the soul to God, then, and the relation to Him with special and specific reference to the still existing fact of sin in us, is naturally the central and all-absorbing present question of the spirit. He is most in the mind of the Gospel of Jesus Christ who, the most conscious of all the infinite that he is not in himself, is the most confident and assured of the complete and perfect that he is in Christ, that is to say, in faith. That is the sense in which Jesus Christ takes away our sins before even we have had time to more than begin the putting them away ourselves, and makes us wholly at one with God while yet we are at all our own infinite distance from Him. By having reconciled us in Himself, He now purifies or cleanses us in ourselves; or in the commoner language of theology, having justified us by His own act of grace, He sanctifies us through our own act in Him of faith.

The condition of our Lord's taking away our sin was that He should Himself be our high priest; and

the condition of His being our high priest was that He should be one with us in all our human nature and human condition. He must be truly in our place, if He would truly accomplish our task. The point so far is that what He was and did was determined and defined by the task to be accomplished; and what the task was was dependent upon what we were and our condition. But the deeper point still lies in a yet deeper fact, which is involved if not expressed in the passage before us. The task, we agree, was the undoing or doing away with sin. Now why was it proper or befitting, if not necessary, for God in doing away with sin to do it by so supreme and extreme an act as that of incarnation and crucifixion? And, I repeat that when I say necessary, I do not mean necessity in God making the thing so, but necessity in the thing's being what and as God has made it. Sin being what it is, or rather holiness being what it is, and sin merely its negation or contradiction, why could sin be done away, and holiness restored and established, by God himself in us, only by an incarnation and a crucifixion? Of course I shall not pretend to answer all that question; but I will undertake to say something in explanation of it.

Let us consider, somewhat in their reverse order, the points involved in these two closing verses. Whatever our Lord accomplished or became in our flesh or nature is most intimately and inseparably connected with what we become through Him in it. There is nothing said or implied of an act performed or of a

becoming accomplished, apart from or instead of us. He is the expression to us of what we have to accomplish and become, and of the divine power and way of our accomplishing and becoming it. Inasmuch as He Himself has accomplished holiness and attained life, and reveals to us and imparts to us the way and the power of holiness and life, He is able to succour and help, even unto salvation, all those who have to accomplish holiness and attain life. He does not save them from having to do it all; He helps and enables them to do it all. It was bound to be so, it could not be otherwise, because in the divine intention and meaning and nature of the thing, the accomplishing holiness and achieving or attaining life is just that which makes and constitutes us personal spirits, or spiritual persons.

If God has made us rational and free; if He has endowed us with a personality whose essence consists in our own self-accomplishment and becoming, then none other, not even God, can accomplish or become for or instead of us. God Himself in our salvation can only help or enable us to accomplish and become ourselves. And herein is the paradox or anomaly of God, in this Epistle, being spoken of as able — or, as we shall see, enabled — to succour and help us in the matter of our personal salvation. We only can work it out, but He can work in us to will and to do of His good pleasure.

I need not repeat what has been sufficiently insisted upon in other connections, that the salvation which God and our own spiritual personalities impose upon

us the necessity of working out for ourselves can consist in no other than one specific and definite thing. The Cross, as our own personal death to sin and the world, and life in and to God and holiness; the Cross as our accomplished repentance unto the only limit of death to sin, and as our victory of faith unto the perfect limit of an actual and attained life of God, what else or other than the Cross of Christ can be the way by which we may come to God? As there is none other Name or Personality under heaven wherein, so neither is there any other act whereby, we may be saved, save the one act of the One Person who as God in man and man in God is able to make His death our death and His life our life.

I spoke of the anomaly of God's being described as able, or even as enabled, to help us in the task of our salvation. By the fact of His having been as one of us tempted and saved, He is able to help under temptation and to enable unto salvation those who are undergoing the experience of salvation through suffering or temptation. There is a reference, silent for us, in the very tense of the verb used just above, "to make propitiation," to the inseparable connection of Christ's and our own act of self-reconciliation with God. The use of the present tense, instead of the aorist, expresses the fact that Christ's single, and once-for-all completed, act of (on the part of humanity) self-reconciliation or at-one-ment with God, is continuously being re-enacted in and by us, as we by His enabling grace and aid are enduring temptation and attaining

victory, are dying His death and rising into His life.

Let us in all reverence, and keeping closely to the sense of possible and impossible which I have more than once limited and defined, ask ourselves and endeavour seriously to answer this question: Things being as God has made and has revealed them, and as now we know they are, how otherwise than He has done could God have become to us the salvation that He is? That is to say, how otherwise could His love and His grace have entered into us and become our salvation, our holiness and righteousness, our eternal life and our divine blessedness? Can we now conceive of God's saving us from a distance by a word or act of power? Or by what intermediate act or process, shall we say, between that extreme on one side and, on the other, the extreme of the Incarnation, the divine mystery of His self-identification with us, of His becoming one with us to make us, that is, to enable us to become, one with Himself, to make our minds, our hearts, our wills, our lives, ourselves, His? There is now no longer any possible meaning or end of religion but Incarnation. There is no task or function of Incarnation but human redemption and salvation. There is no salvation but the cross of Christ, by which alone we are dead to sin, and the world and the flesh of sin, and alive unto holiness and the Father and Spirit of holiness.

III

THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD TO FAITH

Hebrews 3-4

“WHEREFORE, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Jesus!” Our heavenly calling! — St. Paul speaks of it as our high calling, our call upward or above; and he prays that the eyes of our heart may be enlightened, that we may know what is the hope of our calling, what the riches of the glory of our inheritance. The subject of the two chapters we are now to consider is mainly our calling and destination in Jesus Christ, our own attitude and relation to the call, and especially the condition and means of our final attaining it.

Let us consider, first, Jesus as the Apostle, the messenger and bearer to us, of the heavenly call, the call from above and the call to what is above. The Gospel of God is primarily a call, a call upon us and upon all that is in us, a call of God expressly designed and calculated or fitted to bring out in response to it all that, in thought, feeling, and action, all that in life, character, and destiny most truly and most fully determines and constitutes ourselves.

Jesus Christ is God's address and appeal to our

intelligence, our understanding, our reason. He is God's truth to us of ourselves; He is all that we ourselves mean, and are alike destined by our nature and predestined by God to become. There is no other interpretation of human nature, nor justification of human life and condition, nor realization of human destiny, than that revealed to us in the person of our Lord. The message, invitation, and appeal of Jesus Christ to us is that of the meaning, truth, and reality of ourselves. To know Him is the highest act and perfection of human reason.

Jesus Christ is God's appeal too to our heart, our affections. We are constituted by our nature not only to know but to love; we are more the creatures of our hearts than of our heads. It is our feelings, affections, desires, rather than our thoughts or knowledge that determine our wills and our acts. The heart has its proper object in the supremely beautiful or lovable, as well as the head in the supremely true. It is the death of all perfection to stop upon that which is less than perfect. Aristotle teaches us that the end of the happy life is not to limit or deny pleasure or desire, but to place it, to find our pleasure in, to fix our desire upon, the perfect and blessed object. Christianity is the complete satisfaction of love, as well as the perfect knowledge of truth.

The appeal to our intelligence and our affections is necessarily the appeal to our wills, to our personal acts and activities, to our life and character, to all that in its totality makes and constitutes us. God's call to us

in Jesus Christ is a call to manhood and selfhood, to self-realization and completion.

The content of God's call is the object of our faith; it becomes our calling, our profession or confession. By the grace of God we call ourselves what He calls us, we profess ourselves what He declares us, we confess and acknowledge His meaning of us to be our meaning, His end of us our end. And Jesus Christ is not merely the divine message or expression to us of that call and calling; He is more than the mere meaning, He is the promise, the power, the fulfilment of it. Faith holds already all these in possession. Nothing can either disappoint or defeat faith; if anything either disappoints or defeats it, it is only an exposure of the fact that what professed to be faith was not faith. Jesus Christ as Himself the author and finisher, the realization and completion, of our faith, is Himself also the divine expression and expresser, fulfiller and fulfilment, of our heavenly calling and confession.

Apostle and High Priest of our confession! All the truth of what Jesus is in us and for us in our heavenly calling is more and more to be concentrated into the fact of His high priesthood. It is in His perfect identification with us in nature and condition, in His perfect similarity of experience and sympathy in temptation, finally in His achievement or attainment of the perfect end of death to sin and life to God, — it is in these that His relation to ourselves and His part in our destinies find their perfect fulfilment and expression.

There may be something in the suggestion that Jesus,

as Apostle and High Priest, was both Moses and Aaron to the Church of the New Testament. Attention has already been called to the contrast as well as comparison between Moses and Jesus as over the house of God in their respective dispensations. Moses is identified with the house itself, though the highest in it. Jesus, though Himself too in and of the house and the head of it, is identified not with the house as part of it, but with Him who is over the house as builder and disposer of it. It is the older and larger question, which I have somewhere elaborated: Whether our Lord in His eternal living and vital relation to creation or nature, as its ideal principle, its final and efficient cause, is to be identified with creation or with Creator; whether in His incarnate relation to humanity, in His act or work of human redemption and completion, He is to be classed as man or as God. The question, as I have said, runs implicitly through all our Epistle, and there is no doubt of what part the Writer is. He who always and everywhere, in nature and in grace, as head and author alike of natural and spiritual creation, of Church and world, who manifests Himself as cause and not mere expression of all that He is and does, as creator as well as creature, as sanctifier as well as sanctified, He must necessarily be classed in His higher rather than in His lower category, however truly He may be the unity of both.

But there is a further question in the distinction made between the servant in the house, Moses, and the Son over the house, Jesus. I have no hesitation in affirming

that the New Testament assumes not only, of course, the eternal personal pre-existence of our Lord, but His eternal sonship in Himself to the Father. Our Lord is not only eternal Logos but He is eternal Son of God. But I am equally sure that the sonship with which we have ordinarily to do in this Epistle and in the New Testament generally is the sonship of man attained or acquired in His person and by His act; that is to say, it is not the sonship eternally possessed by Him as God, but the sonship temporally created or accomplished by Him as man. It is as man become son of God by a supreme act of redeemed and completed manhood that He was raised higher than the angels. However true it is that it is only through the higher essential or divine sonship that the lower communicated or human sonship was possible, — in other words, that our human sonship is but an incarnation or impartation of divine sonship, — certain it is, that even in the person of our Lord Himself the communicated or constituted human sonship is much more the subject-matter of the Gospel than the communicating and constituting divine sonship. The one is indeed always presupposed and involved, but it is the other which is traced for us in all the details of its process. The constitutive principle is, of course, higher than the constituted act or fact, but it is the constituted fact of our own accomplished sonship in the person of our Lord that is more immediately our part and that it more immediately concerns us to learn. Not how our Lord *was* Son as God, but how He *became* Son

as man, is the subject of this whole Epistle to the Hebrews.

I may go a step farther and say that there is a latent contrast, as between Moses and Jesus themselves, so also between their respective dispensations, or their representative relations to humanity. The law was given through Moses, grace and truth came — became, or came about — through Jesus Christ. Moses is the given Law, Jesus Christ is the come Life. Humanity as represented by Moses is servant in God's house; humanity as represented by, rather as realized in, Jesus Christ is son in the Father's house. We are no longer subjects under a law without us, we are the subjects of the law within us. God has given us in our Lord to have life in ourselves. He that believeth in me, says Jesus, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters; he shall be a source of life within himself; the life of God shall be his own life. That, as we saw, is what was meant by God's speaking to us no longer through prophets but in a Son. The prophet mediates to us God's word or law; the Son mediates God's self, God's life.

And now comes in another great truth, the interpretation of another part in the figure of the house. We have seen what Jesus is in the house or to the house; what are we? We are the house: Whose house are we, says the Apostle. The house, or elsewhere the tabernacle or the temple, is that in the which it pleases God to dwell. All creation is His temple; but He is more at home in the contrite heart. Here is the one

anomaly, the one mystery and miracle of the universe, the miracle of freedom, of our spiritual independence even of God. The heart of man is the house of God, but God dwells and can dwell only in the contrite heart. His omnipotence of grace waits upon and is conditioned by our will and pleasure of faith. His house are we, *if* we hold fast our faith, our confidence and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end. The topic then of this second division of our subject, this second two chapters of our Epistle, is faith; faith, its end or object; faith, its meaning and function; faith, its failures and its victory.

We cannot overestimate, we cannot sufficiently value, the supreme importance of the Old Testament for the proper understanding of the New. We do not know whether, in our Lord Himself, most to wonder at His complete possession or His perfect transcendence of the whole mind and spirit of the Old Testament. It is the supreme illustration of the principle that we can only truly differ from or pass beyond that which we have first perfectly appreciated and understood. If it be true that perfection for us, of any sort, natural or spiritual, is attainable only by stages, in many parts and by many ways, then there is a relative and temporary meaning and use too in incompletenesses and imperfections. We are never to condemn the past in its time for being behind the present in its fuller time. It was the wisdom of our Lord to absorb in Himself, as it should be the wisdom of Christianity to include and carry on in itself, all the truth and all the life that

went before. The Old Testament is the story of the genesis and evolution of the spiritual faculties and functions. With all its incompletenesses and imperfections, even its aberrations and errors, it is forever the text-book of the spirit, the illustrated and picturesque annals of the fortunes and progress of the spiritual consciousness and conscience of humanity. And it was a light shining more and more unto the perfect day of human holiness, righteousness, and eternal life.

The redemption from the ancient bondage, the new birth out of the old death of Egypt; the lifelong journey through the wilderness with its varied and trying experiences and temptations; the promised land always before and never in sight; the discipline and issue of faith and unbelief; the many failures to enter in, the final victory and entrance of the few: will that ever cease to be the story-book of the spiritual life, divinely wiser and more helpful than all the fairy tales of human science and adventure? It is a great mistake, in the exaggerations of other-worldliness, to underrate and neglect God's great book of this world, of nature, too; but the extreme of the lesser evil is not to be remedied or avoided by absorption in that of the greater. It is still true that the most proper study for us is that of ourselves, and still true that we only truly know ourselves in our Godward relations, in Him who has been eternally appointed for men in the things that pertain unto God. And so the Writer especially to God's ancient people takes his brethren back to the old text-book of faith to prepare them for newer and higher application of that

divine principle to diviner facts and truths of God and man.

“Wherefore, as saith the Holy Ghost, ‘To-day if ye shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation, as in the days of temptation in the wilderness, where your fathers tempted me by proving me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was displeased with this generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart: they did not know my ways; as I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.’” “Harden not your hearts —”; we are said to harden our hearts, and God is said to harden our hearts, with reference too to the same acts of hardening. Pharaoh’s heart was hardened: Pharaoh hardened his heart: God hardened Pharaoh’s heart. That which is at one time described as a natural process and result is at another time characterized as an act of Pharaoh, and at yet another as an act of God. The constitution of nature is an act of God, and God has constituted us by nature, through the inevitable operation of a spiritual law, to determine ourselves, to fix irrevocably the bent of our characters, the issue of our lives and destinies, by our own action and reaction upon all the circumstances of our outward condition in the world.

The meaning, reason, and function of all the outward condition in which we are placed is expressed in the word temptation, trial, probation. The elementary lesson, not only of God’s people then but of God’s people in every time, was uttered in the words, “All the commandments which I command

thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers." There is always a *this day*, and always the promise before us of a blessing which we are to go in and possess; and always too the necessary condition, that we observe the divinely appointed laws, that we follow the one possible way, of attaining and enjoying the promised blessing. "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God hath led thee these forty years in the wilderness, that He might humble thee, to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments, or no. And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by everything that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."

The end of probation is not only testing or trying, it is discipline and training, it is exercising and developing. Above all things faith, which is the highest energizing of the soul, is born in and is perfected by the things it suffers and survives. Faith is indeed the soul's survival through all suffering, its victory over all conditions. The perfect faith is that which, in reaction with all things, has endured all, done all, become all. The great lesson of faith is the learning to see through the visible to the invisible, to look beyond bread to the word of God, to be able to say, My meat and drink

is to do the will of Him that sent me. Not for our Lord alone but for us all, The kingdom of heaven is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any one of you the evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God; but exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called To-day — while still there remains for you a To-day; lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin: for we are become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end.” The end of faith, the substance of the promise, the thing or matter of our final inheritance, is expressed in the Old Testament under several images or figures. The one retained here is that of a rest, a rest after the weary wanderings of the wilderness, the rest that in one form or another, as it is less or better understood by ourselves, always flits before and always remains to be attained by the people of God. “Man never is, but always to be, blessed.”

What is the blessedness? Here, at once, the whole great truth in its totality is expressed in a phrase, and then left to be analyzed and understood in detail through all the rest of our exposition: We are become partakers with Christ, partakers of Christ, if only the beginning of our faith goes on with us to the end, if only the principle of faith within us is perfected into fruition. Grant, O Lord, that we who know thee now by faith, may afterward have the fruition of thy glorious Godhead! Superficially, and within the limits

of the imagery recalled by the Apostle, we are partakers *with* Christ; — although it should then be, with Jesus. The people of that former day did not enter in with their Jesus, or Joshua. And even the one or two exceptions who did so did not find in what they entered the true promise or the true promised land. We never do find our heaven in that in which we are always expecting it. We all die not having received the promises; but blessed are we, if we die still in faith, a faith which death so far from extinguishing will but realize; if we die still seeing our hope and greeting it from afar, and confessing that we have been but wanderers in the wilderness, pilgrims and strangers upon the earth. No Moses or Joshua upon earth will bring us into the true promises, but we enter into and share them with the true Captain of our true salvation. We are in faith, we shall be in fact, partakers with Christ.

But that is very small part of the truth; we are become not merely partakers externally with Christ, but partakers internally *of* Christ. Jesus Christ is no mere outward exemplar, no mere distant cause, He is the very substance and matter, the inward realization and reality of all our faith, our hope, our inheritance. He is in us that kingdom of God and of heaven which is not meat or drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Jesus Christ is indeed an external revelation and manifestation to us of ourselves. They who see and know Him find in Him a meaning, a reason, an end, for which life is worth living; which explains and justifies all the mysterious depths and

heights which we are called upon to traverse in the difficult and painful attainment of our destiny.

Jesus Christ is indeed too the external instrument and cause of our salvation. The laws and processes of spiritual causation—how the Spirit or power or grace of God can be the cause of spiritual effects in us of which we too must be the cause—may on their invisible divine side be beyond our ken, but on their visible human side we may to a certain extent trace and comprehend them. God draws and moves us with the bands of a man. He works supernaturally within the laws and methods of His natural operations. He moves and moulds us through our own reasons, affections, desires, wills, personal activities, habits, characters, lives. We can only ourselves become what we ourselves know, love, desire, will, and purpose as the end of our becoming, as that which will constitute and complete our being. That which is truly final cause to us will of itself be efficient cause of us. That is the divine method of our new creation in Christ Jesus. His name, through faith in His name, makes us every whit whole; that is to say, What He is to us, through our faith in what He is to us, operates in us to make us what He is. As God speaks and it is done: as when He said light there was light; so His Word of light and life to us in Jesus Christ *is* light and life to us directly from Himself. He none the less makes it so because only we too ourselves can make it so.

It is not, however, enough to say that Jesus Christ is both external expression and external cause of our

salvation or of ourselves. It is not enough even to say that He is the internal truth and power of us; we are not partakers of something from Christ merely, as truth or power, we are partakers of Christ. We are not sharers of a thing, but in union with a Person: and we are in so intimate union with the Person, that He is not merely in and with us but becomes identified and identical with us; we are no longer we but He. I live no longer, Christ lives in me. This is no idle refining nor mere word-play. Christ does not only give us our life, He is our life. We do indeed want the thing He is; but the thing He is is nothing, it is dead, apart from Himself. We want to be made like Him, to have a holiness, a righteousness, a life like His, but all these things of Him can have no existence for us apart from Him. The life, or anything that belongs to the life, of God, of Christ, of the Holy Ghost, is inseparable from Them, from Him. From holy, righteous, or good man or angel, take away man or angel and you have left — God. It is not enough for you that God shall be in heaven; it is not enough for you that God is in Christ; it is necessary for you that God be in you, that He shall be you.

There is always more wisdom in the real catholic conclusions of the Church than there often is, or, we may say, than there ever is, in the reasons or proofs given for them. In the divine sacrament in which we are, in the most immediate and direct way, made partakers of Christ, where our faith accepts God's word of grace with nothing between, we are not willing to

recognize only a sign or expression of the life to be made ours; we are not content with any mere intermediary virtue or power of it. We want the life itself; or rather, since there is no such impersonal thing as a life itself, we want The Life Himself. We eat and drink nothing else and nothing less than Jesus Christ, who is God our holiness, our righteousness, our eternal life. But there is no Jesus Christ for our life but Christ crucified. We can be baptized into Him only as we are baptized into His death and His risen life; the flesh and blood we eat and drink are His broken body and His shed blood; surely not His dead self, but Himself dead for ever with the death that is our only life, and alive with the life that is ours only through death with Him.

We are partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end. Faith is the natural condition and means of our personally attaining or accomplishing anything. But there is a natural basis or ground for the most absolute certainty of our attaining the particular end proposed to us in Jesus Christ. It consists primarily in the fact that that is our true end. The ends of nature, sought by the processes of nature, are naturally the most sure of attainment. The spiritually, or higher, natural is that which not only is consonant or in harmony with the ends of God and man, for that all nature is, but is itself the immediate and true end of God and man. The true end is that which is not only so in itself, but for which all things else are the true means. When one

truly recognizes his end in Christ, He cannot but recognize it as not only the end to which he himself most naturally and therefore most certainly tends, but that upon which everything else attends, the end towards which God is working, and therefore all things work together.

Mere faith, *fides sola*, is of itself a power; it is the most necessary condition and the most effectual means to the success of all personal action, to the attainment of any personal end; whether it be a true or false end, a natural or abnormal activity. But where the end is a true or real end, and consequently the action a natural or normal one, it is not mere or sheer faith that carries it to success, but it is the end itself working and accomplishing itself through the faith. It is an all-important matter to remember that we are not saved *fide sola*, by faith alone. "It is of faith that it might be by grace." Grace is a species of divine power which can operate only in and through faith. It is God's working in our working, and that can take place only in that personal relation of ourselves to God, our intelligence, our feelings or affections, our will, which we call faith. Any action of God in us which is not also our action is the operation of a divine power, but it is not that specific divine power which we call grace. Our natural perceptions like those of colour or sound have no objective existence in themselves. They are purely subjective; that is they are purely actions or reactions of ourselves in response to external stimuli. So grace is a divine power indeed.

and a divine power acting in us, but acting only in our own reactions with it.

As the divine presence and operation in us, as potential grace, becomes actual grace only through our own reaction with it, or through our faith, so, on the other hand, the subjective reaction of faith is nothing in itself or except in correspondence with the objective reality and power of grace. It is necessary, therefore, always to insist upon the reality of the object and content of faith. The truth of God is not the validity of a mere idea — the idea, for example, of a perfect righteousness or an absolute goodness as the ultimate principle, the final and purposive cause of the universe. Love or goodness or righteousness is wholly a quality only and not an entity; it is wholly a personal quality and can have no abstract existence, no existence apart from a personality or a Person coequal and co-universal with itself. It is only the Personal God who gives content and reality to the idea of goodness or righteousness as a universal law. The truth of Jesus Christ is not the idea or ideal of a humanity in perfect correspondence with Deity, man on his part perfectly responsive to God on His part, the acme or highest reach of humanity heavenward or Godward. An idea is something empty and lacking content and reality. It may have meaning, but faith wants something more than meaning for its content, it wants realization, reality. Christianity does not only *mean* man redeemed and complete in God; that is indeed a very true meaning, but it is

the ultimate function of faith not to conceive a meaning but to realize a fact. Christianity is man redeemed and complete in God, because it is God incarnate and fulfilled in man. We apprehend that for which we are apprehended in Christ Jesus. We lay hold upon grace because grace has laid hold upon us; it is only secondarily we by our faith working out our salvation; it is primarily God by His Grace, that is, by Himself in us, working out our salvation.

Therefore again, in the sacrament of our life it is not a sign only that we receive, nor yet a virtue only or an effect. It is not faith only that is active, nor faith that is the most actual, in that transaction. It is grace that is the truest actor; and grace not as a virtue or a thing, but as the personal Holy Ghost, as Jesus Christ, as God. Faith in anything, irrespective of the truth or reality of the thing, is an empty shell or semblance which sustains itself by its own bare assurance. Faith in that which has indeed a true meaning and would be a true end, but has no other warrant for faith than that it means the truth, has a certain validity so far as it goes. But the Christian faith that takes a real hold upon the concrete and realized reality of God actually in Christ, and Christ actually in ourselves and actually ourselves, is something infinitely and divinely removed from all lower caricatures or shadows of itself.

There is a consistency in the New Testament in the identification of unbelief with disobedience. Disobedience is the outward form or varied expressions of that of which unbelief is the spiritual condition and

cause. When St. Paul spoke of our Lord as having been, in His humanity, obedient unto death, he was describing Him as having been as man true to all that He was as God. Obedience means truth to God, truth to ourselves as potential children of God by nature, predestined children of God by grace. Without faith that obedience is as impossible as the tree without its roots, as impossible as any other effect without its necessary condition or cause. Unbelief and disobedience are New Testament synonyms. Who were they that did provoke? With whom was He displeased forty years? Was it not with them that sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware He that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that were disobedient? And we see that they were not able to enter in because of unbelief.

We have now, in the fourth chapter of our Epistle, to discuss more definitely the meaning and truth of the Rest of God, the rest that remaineth for the people of God. "Let us fear therefore, lest haply, a promise being left of entering into His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it." The fact or reality of the rest is proved before its nature is defined. The first point is that the rest itself has survived and will survive all mere shadows or figures of it. Rests are promised, rests are eagerly expected, rests are always either failing to come or bitterly disappointing when they come. Promises are ever failing, and yet ever being renewed; there is always a To-day in which there is the condition and the warning, "If ye shall

hear His voice —!" If we wonder why Life is such a succession of endless failures, we have only to remember that every to-day is a day of temptation in the wilderness, and a day of provocation through unbelief and disobedience. But all the failures of the rests do not nullify the promise of the rest. Though we all die not having received the promise, yet the promise remains.

The promise of the rest is not to be found in the Scriptures alone. It is written there only because the Scriptures are a transcript of the universal heart of man. Eradicate from the mind, the heart, the hope of man the question of his end, his destiny, the dream of victory in his warfare, of rest from his toil, of a promised land beyond all the defeats and failures and deaths of the wilderness, and you have done the most possible to dehumanize him. The end is that which most defines a thing; the end is that upon which every existing thing is most intent. The acorn can never rest until it is an oak; man can never rest until all his manhood has been accomplished and attained. No finite or temporal meaning and reason and end of himself will ever satisfy and still the craving of spiritual manhood for more life, all life, the life of God. The true end, the real end, can never cease to be a goad, a craving, a necessity to any living being. The real end is not a speculation, an invention, it is a fact, and it can never cease acting as an end; and it is the end that determines the whole nature and process, the whole life and destiny, of every being in the universe. Our

Lord's promise to be with us to the end of the world will be fulfilled; He will be with us to the end of the world, because He is the true end of the world.

The rest of man is the rest of God: we shall enter into His rest. There is a meaning in the rest of God of which the Sabbath is a faint symbol. God rested from His work; what was His rest? The only rest from true work, the only true rest from work, is to be sought and found in the completion and perfection of the work. God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. And God finished His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And there is a promise to man, written in his very nature, predestined before the worlds were made, that he shall enter into the rest of God. The hope and expectation of it, under a thousand crude and partial forms, persists because it is the first and last principle in us of our spiritual constitution. Man's instinct and intuition of his end is God's prophecy and promise of his end.

God's rest is not cessation from work; the thought is absurd and was never intended. When our Lord was charged with doing His works of love and power, apparently by preference, on the sabbath day, His answer was, *My Father worketh even until now, and I work.* God's rest is not idleness or inaction, it is the perfection of activity. Man is capable of God's rest because he is capable of God's work. He has a rest like God, because he has a work like God. The distinctive glory of man, that in which God has made

him in His own image, is that God has made him a worker like Himself and given him a work of his own to do. He has given us to have life in ourselves, He has given to us to do our own work, to live our own lives. He that is entered into his rest hath himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. This personal otherness from and even independence of God is the condition and the potentiality of man's exaltation above all other works of God's hands, as it is the awful possibility of all his equal degradation.

IV

CHRIST, THE ALL-TEMPTED YET ALL-SINLESS

Hebrews 3-4

THE work of man, the work of each man, is to be himself. All that Jesus Christ Himself accomplished or attained in His humanity is contained and expressed in the single fact that He was the man He was. The task of being a man, of actualizing all the divine potentialities of manhood, of making man as God, of making man one with God, was accomplished in Him. He is the author, not only the teacher or revealer but the maker and opener, of the Way to God; When He had overcome the sharpness of death, He opened unto us the gate of everlasting life. As God Himself is most God to us when He fulfils Himself, fulfils that which He is, fulfils Love, in other, in man; so man is only then wholly man, wholly himself, when he loses himself in other, in God.

In that completeness of finding through losing, of receiving through surrendering ourselves, is our only rest or peace. As ourselves are only God's through our own making us so, so too only through our making ourselves God's are we truly our own, or ourselves. Christianity is the concrete realization of an

older conception of that end of human existence toward which all normal human action cannot but strive. Rest or peace or happiness is to be found only in the fulness of life. It is not a state or a condition, whether outward or inward; it is the perfect energizing of all the powers of the soul; it is the bringing into complete and harmonious actuality all the potentialities of our nature, all the activities of our life. Only He who comes that we may have life and have it more abundantly, have it with all the abundance of God Himself, can be the true end and rest of our souls.

If Joshua had given the rest, there would not have been talk of another day, "To-day if ye shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts." The day of warning, of temptation in the wilderness, of the danger of provocation, of the sure promise to faith, remaineth for the people of God. Let us therefore give diligence to enter into that rest, that no man fall after the same example of disobedience. For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. The danger of unbelief and the incentive to faith and obedience turn upon the nature of the object of our faith or unfaith. That with which we have to do is the word of God. We are not dealing here with mere impersonal truths or facts, we are face to face and have to do directly with the living God. The Word of our salvation is the

living God Himself. The point now is not our faith, but that which lives and works in our faith. The Word of God is not like other words. Other words are mere signs or symbols, and may be signs and symbols of mere things. The Word of God is God; it is the thing it means and does the thing it says.

We know better than we can prove or explain, that if an instituted sacrament is a direct word of God to our souls, then here is something more than mere sign or meaning; here is *res ipsa*, the thing meant or signified. If Baptism means regeneration, faith must see in it regeneration; if the sacrament of the altar means the communion of the body and blood of Christ, faith must receive in it all the divine reality of the body and blood of Christ. So, more comprehensively, the word of God which is the object of our faith and obedience, or of our unbelief and rejection, is the eternal personal Word of God, who is God. Here is something infinitely able to live and work in our faith, and so infinitely capable of reproducing and becoming the life and work of God in us and of us in God.

The Scriptures compare the working of God's word in our natural or physical and in our spiritual and moral creation. "Thou hast knit me together in my mother's womb. I will give thanks unto thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. My frame was not hidden from thee when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see mine unperfect substance, and in thy book were all my members written, which day

by day were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." (Ps. 139.) And this wonder of his physical becoming is to the Psalmist but the mysterious background of the yet deeper mystery of his spiritual shaping and framing: "Thou hast searched me and known me, and art acquainted with all my ways. There is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! Search me and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts: and see if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." The Word of God works with a vast and mysterious difference as it fulfils itself now in the unconscious matter of natural creation and now in the conscious and free subject of spiritual creation. One is the direct and immediate working of the Word upon its object; the other is the working of the Word through the Spirit; that is, through the reflex response and working with it of its object. But it is always the same Word of God which knows how to fulfil itself according to the nature and end of that in which it works. For both the Word and the Spirit perform their several functions according to the will of God.

It is only in the poetic language of the spiritual imagination that we can express the living realities of God's working anywhere; it is too wonderful for us, we

cannot attain unto it; His ways are past finding out. The Word acts, the Spirit breathes, where and as they list; we know the effects, and through the effects the causes; but we cannot know the secret mode of their causation. All that we do know is that, within all the range of our possible experience, there is no real cause or causation at all if there be not that of personal origination, of thought or word and spirit. All else in the universe is mere transmission, the passing on of motion or energy. We know cause at all only through the experience of ourselves as finite, that is as limited and conditioned, causes, or persons. If there is any real cause at all, it can be none other, or nothing else than God. And we know that there is cause, therefore we know that there is God.

The Word of God is living and active. It is a living, that is to say, a spiritual or personal entity or subject; and its energy or activity is not of that necessary or mechanical sort which is not an energy at all but only a semblance or mode of energy, but a real or a personal energy and activity. The power of God unto human salvation, which manifests itself in Christ and in all living members of Christ, is the power of life itself in Him and in them. We have power in God to be what God is and to do what God does. Our finiteness or limitation in God is natural or physical, not spiritual; it is not in our life but in our organs of life. We are conscious in ourselves of the possibility and the law or demand of a perfect or infinite holiness, righteousness, moral and spiritual life. We are limited only in our

present powers, not in our real or living powers. We experience even in our present powers occasional conditions, moments of exceptional elation or exaltation, in which we unexpectedly and extraordinarily transcend our ordinary selves, and which are suggestions to us of what we might become through permanent changes of our present powers or organs. If when drowning one experiences a singular quickening of the power of memory, recalls details long lost to ordinary consciousness, why may not some even physical change in us be the basis of that completer elevation of memory above the limit of common consciousness, which will be the opening of the books in the great day of universal judgment? Our Lord's transfiguration was but an anticipation of His resurrection, a momentary revelation of the glory that was going to be revealed when physically as well as spiritually He should pass from the limitations of the natural into the expanded powers of the spiritual.

Our Lord Himself said that the two functions of the Son of man, or of the Incarnate Word, were the giving of life, and the execution of judgment. These in themselves are not the contrary or distinct things which they may superficially appear to be. Judgment is discrimination, separation. All life begins with and consists in differentiation; and though in mere physical life the differentiation is for the simple end of specialization and organization, in spiritual and moral life it has a far higher purpose and result. Out of it proceeds the entire possibility and activity of moral

distinction, moral judgment, choice, will, action, character, life, personality. Rational distinctions of true or false, moral distinctions of good or bad, right or wrong, spiritual distinctions of nature or grace, self or God, law or gospel, works or faith, — the Word of God is a two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing of soul and spirit, as well as of joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. For *krisis*, for criticism and judgment am I come into the world, says our Lord. Life-giving is itself judgment; that which is life to him who has it cannot but be death to him who has it not; if the Word and the Spirit of God, if holiness and righteousness, the nature shared with God and the law of God fulfilled, are life, what must be the unbelief and the disobedience that are the personal rejection of all these?

Not only is life to some necessarily judgment to others; it is equally true that only judgment properly exercised and executed is life. God's wrath upon sin is as necessary and as salutary to us as His grace to repentance and faith. If we cannot combine with God in His judgment upon ourselves we cannot be recipients from Him of His grace of life. Nay, if we cannot in very truth and reality unite with Him in the execution upon ourselves of His penalty of death for sin, then we cannot receive from Him the supreme gift of His resurrection unto life. And there is no creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

The Epistle comes back to its refrain, in terms at the close of the four chapters very similar to those in which the first two were summed up at their close. "Having then a great high priest, who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need." The point always in view is the full and exact determination of the person and the work of the great High Priest. (This involves, of course, an analysis of the true meaning and function of high priesthood, but the matter defines itself only step by step, rather in the process of the action than in the progress of the argument. In which we shall see, I think, that high priesthood defines itself in the transcendent act of Christ, rather than that that act is to be limited or defined by any precedent fact or meaning of high priesthood. We shall go no further now than the argument has progressed, but consider as carefully as we can the terms of description used in the passage immediately before us.

"Seeing that we have a great high priest, who hath passed through the heavens —": The language of the highest truth is that of poetry rather than of natural science, of intuition rather than of sense perception, of the spirit rather than of the letter. When we speak

of our Lord passing through the heavens, we are not talking of material spaces, but of spiritual progresses and processes. The expressions in the Epistle are significantly and interestingly progressive. Here the High Priest has passed through the heavens; at Ch. VII. 26 He has become higher than the heavens; at Ch. IX. 24 He has entered into heaven itself. The processes and stages are not material but spiritual. When our Lord promises that we shall be with Him where He is, and adds that no man cometh to the Father but by Him, he means something just as real as any material door or path can be; indeed, He speaks in the actual terms of material things when He says, I go to prepare a place for you, and I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also; and whither I go, ye know the way. Here is everything said in terms of places and ways and goings and comings, and to some of us they may seem the expression of material things and acts. I am quite sure that when our Lord says, I am the door, or I am the way, He says something as literally true as though it were a material door or path He was speaking of; it is as literally true that only by Him or through Him we can come to the Father — to God's fatherhood through our sonship — as it is true that we enter a house through a door or reach a place by a path. But we do not, on that account, mean to say that our Lord is a material door or path; there are other kinds of doors and ways than physical or material ones; and they are none the less actual or real.

So to have passed through the heavens, to have become higher than the heavens, to have entered into heaven itself, the very heaven of heavens, means what? Why this — that there are higher and highest heights of heaven; that heaven is a process and a progress; that heavenliness is to be attained only by taking all the steps of the way that leads to it. Jesus Christ is not only the end but He is the way, and every step of the way. Step by step of the necessary appointed way of human salvation, of human redemption and completion, He himself became and is our salvation. He suffered for sins that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh and quickened or made alive in the spirit.

A great high priest who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God! It is His human name, His humanity, in which He is Son of God; and He has passed through and above all the heavens, and into the heaven itself, which is the accomplished nature and life of God, in order to become the Son of God. We shall begin to see in the next chapter how that Jesus Christ was glorified to be made a high priest by the identical supreme act in which He was born son of God; or in other terms, how, while the law had appointed men high priests who were still imperfect, God appointeth real high priest Him who is Son perfected for evermore, or Him who as man is forevermore perfected in His divine sonship.

Having such a high priest, let us grasp securely and hold fast our confession. For we have not a high

priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but one who knows all our weaknesses and temptations, and who has found and made a way of escape by which we too may bear and overcome them. Let us come, therefore, with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need. Let us reflect a little upon the anomaly of this seeming helplessness of God to do more than merely suffer with us or sympathize, and by His loving association of Himself with us give us heart and hope and help to work out our own salvation. Why is not the divine power sufficient of itself to save us, without the necessity of God's having to humble Himself to suffer with us the toil and the agony of our own self-attained salvation? For there is not a word said of our not having to suffer it all, to do it all, to accomplish it all to the very last jot or tittle. All that is said is, He suffers and does it in us and with us, shares with us the last bitter drop of the cup of the human experience that enters into or goes with the making of human life and human destiny.

How impossible it is that the human heart or mind should have ever conceived or devised the Gospel of God! God saves us by reversing all our natural estimates and judgments, and in reversing, correcting, and fulfilling them. God is only, within our apprehension or experience, completely God, perfectly Himself, in the act of sharing our weaknesses and limitations; man only truly finds himself in losing himself, becomes himself by dying to himself. We may speak folly in attempting

to express the wisdom of God's foolishness or the foolishness of God's wisdom, but it is there, and the height of folly is the lack of wisdom to recognize and acknowledge it. We have got, not merely passively to recognize, but actively to realize in ourselves the synthesis of two seemingly opposite truths. The first is that only God can make us ourselves; the second is that only we can be or become ourselves. The most high God can only sympathize with, wait upon, and enable us. His sympathy is an infinite suffering with; His waiting is a divine long-suffering and patience; His help or enabling is an everlasting fellowship and working with us; but His own spiritual creation and predestination of us forbid and forefend His part in our salvation from violating by one jot or tittle our personal constitution or our spiritual task or business. Nothing can be instead of ourselves in the human and humanizing task before us of suffering, attaining, becoming. The prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus is to be like Him, in His way — which is our only way. If we would sit at His right hand and be great in His kingdom, we must drink His cup and be baptized with His baptism.)

There are a few words which I have left out or changed, and which remain for our most minute and exact analysis and interpretation; for they express the very gist of the work of our salvation as wrought in and by Christ. (Our High Priest is described as one who has been at all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. This is the *locus classicus* of the Christian

affirmation of the reality of our Lord's humanity and yet of His sinlessness in it. There is not one of the real New Testament interpreters of our Lord who does not distinctly assert the fact of His sinlessness, and yet always incidentally, and without consciousness of the thought that it is a fact needing assertion or proof. St. Peter says that Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow His steps; who did no sin. St. John says that He was manifested to take away sin, and in Him is no sin. St. Paul says that He was made to be sin for us, Who (Himself) knew no sin. But our present Author is more explicit and exact, and here, if anywhere, we must study the true meaning of the sinlessness of Jesus Christ.

It is not the mere fact of His sinlessness that most concerns us — wonderful as that is, and demanding explanation; the main point for us is rather the *how* than the *what* of His sinlessness. For the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the Gospel of the Way — the way to God, the way into the Holy of Holies, the way of holiness and righteousness and eternal life. If Christianity is only a deeper thinking, a wiser talking, a higher and truer dreaming about this matter of matters with us; if any words can express the fact of it short of these, When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, Thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers, — then Christianity is no Gospel of God. And the all-necessary and important thing is, that the way of Him is the way of us, and the way of us was the way of Him. It was the woman's seed that

bruised the serpent's head; it was the seed and heir of Abraham's faith that inherited God's promise; it was humanity in Jesus that conquered sin, wrought righteousness, and accomplished eternal life.

There is nothing that so contradicts the spiritual truth of the Gospel, and so obscures and hinders the true work of God in the flesh, as any and every form of the attempt to attribute the sinlessness of Jesus to a difference in nature from ours, or a difference in natural condition from ours. Jesus Christ was no more saved by any accident or fact of nature than we are; He was saved only by the personal act of His own holiness and life in the nature. He was holy because He conquered and abolished sin; and He lives forevermore because He was the conqueror and destroyer of death. He performed humanity's task and has reaped humanity's reward; He accomplished humanity's relation of sonship to God, and has come into possession of humanity's inheritance as Son.

There is not a shadow of New Testament basis for the supposition that the motive or meaning of the virgin-birth was any miraculous differencing of our Lord's human nature from us. The sinlessness was a necessity of the person and the work of Him who was born to be the saviour from sin, but the safeguard from sin was not in the nature assumed but in the person assuming it. He was not come to find or receive a sinless nature, but to redeem and save a sinful one; and He redeemed and saved it by His life in it. The nature was indeed sinless in Him,

as He in it; but it was sinless in Him because He was sinless in it, and not *vice versa*. The meaning or truth subserved by the fact of the virgin-birth is, that Jesus Christ is not a son of man but the Son of man; that we know Him not as product of the union of Joseph and Mary but as fruit and expression to us of the union of God and man. The sinlessness or holiness of Jesus is His *differentia* and definition; He is humanity sanctified. But He is not merely sanctification, He is the way of sanctification for man; and the way was, first, not by nature but by Himself in the nature; and, then, not by Himself but by God in Himself. The truth and importance of this requires an exact analysis of the crucial passage before us and one or more others in corroboration.

Our Lord was in all points tempted like as we are — without sin. How or in what sense was He without sin? By an antecedent fact of nature — the fact, namely, that, whereas all we the rest were born into a sinful nature, He was born into a sinless one? But how does our Epistle itself explain the *χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας*? We shall see more fully, probably in the next chapter, where the perfected high priest is described as *κεχωρισμένος ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτωλῶν*, that is, not separate by nature but separated by a specific act in the nature, self-separated and God-separated. The perfect passive participle states the completed end or result of an act or a process. I have before called attention to a significance of tenses in this Epistle the full force of which can be felt only in the original. Jesus Christ does not stand for an

originally holy human nature but a sanctified or made-holy human nature. He became higher than the angels and acquired in the end a more excellent name than they. He is perfected Captain of our salvation through suffering. He is Son, perfected as such by an act of His own, forever. The whole stress of the Epistle is not so much upon what our Lord is, as upon the distinctly human — and yet not at all on that account the less divine — act and process by which He became what He is. In order to better understand our Lord's perfectly human and yet wholly sinless relation to all temptation, let us study a little elsewhere the meaning of temptation. For in that expression, human yet sinless temptation, we have the completest and most exact statement of the accomplished work of Jesus Christ in our humanity.

St. James says, Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love Him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, and He himself tempteth no man; but each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is full-grown, bringeth forth death. There is a blessedness in the fact of temptation itself, a blessedness that cannot come otherwise than by means of temptation. Temptation is the occasion, the opportunity, the means of exercising selfhood, of acquiring personality, of

becoming moral, responsible, free beings, of becoming selves like God, ourselves.

There is no temptation that can befall us but that is human; in the sense, not merely that it is human to be tempted, but that humanity is attained or accomplished only through temptation. Temptation is the natural and only stimulus of moral intelligence and judgment, choice, freedom, virtue, manhood. We complain that temptation produces vice or sin; — yes, but how? Temptation is the only opportunity or way, and therefore it is the call to us, by the exercise of right reason or choice, and free will or self-affirmation, to be or do or become the thing we ought, and so make or fulfil ourselves. This is the meaning or end or final cause of temptation, and when we fail to respond to the call, the call to become men by that which alone can make us men, we must not lay the blame upon the call or the opportunity but upon ourselves who fail to come up to it. The fault of cowardice does not lie in the fact of danger, nor do we lay the blame of sloth upon the toil of labour. The good or ill of things to us lies wholly in our attitude to and action upon them. The devil himself is the supreme evil only as he overcomes us; overcome by us, he is the supreme means of grace. To have met and overcome all temptation, all possibility of evil, was the pure blessedness, the divine glory, of Jesus Christ.

And yet I do not think that St. James meant to go so far back as to express the blessedness of temptation in

itself. He says, Blessed is the man who *endures* temptation, that is, who suffers and survives it, in whom it has accomplished its meaning and end, who through and by means of it, or by his own reaction with it, has acquired and attained his manhood or virtue, his spirituality or holiness, his proper glorification through the suffering necessary to it. For when he hath been approved, that is, proved and approved, he shall receive the crown of life: not a crown upon his life, as external ornament or reward, but life itself, the completeness and perfection of life, as the crown of all right suffering, right doing, and right becoming.

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of, or from, God. In a sense we may and do say that. Temptation or probation is a divine appointment and a necessary experience. But, as I have said, I do not think St. James is going back into that essential constitution of things. Just as when he declares the blessedness of the man who endures temptation he means the man who endures it manfully or successfully, so when here he speaks of him who is tempted he means him who suffers himself to be tempted, who yields to the temptation. Let not the man who is thus tempted put the blame of it upon God; for God leads no man into temptation, in the sense of failing under it. We might as well say that when God gives us the hard and the high life of Jesus Christ, where the hardness and the highness are essential parts of the life, He gives us also the death which is not only the consequence but the essence of our own not accepting or attaining it.

This meaning of tempted, as equivalent to effectually tempted, is like St. Paul's use of the term "called," as meaning effectually called: the called are they who have also answered. So all the called, in one sense, are justified and glorified; whereas it by no means follows that all that are called, in the other sense, are necessarily so. In one sense we are all blessed in being tempted; it is the very first condition, and our highest opportunity, of being blessed at all. In the other sense, we are very far from all blessed through being tempted. The truly blessed through temptation may rightly bless God for all their temptation; the actually or effectually tempted cannot lay upon God the blame of their having been tempted. Where, then, is the cause or the fault of this temptation? Each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. What is meant by each man's own lust?

There are few words in common use that are free from ambiguity. Is nature evil? — or the flesh, or the world? That depends upon what you mean by nature or the flesh or the world. We have strictly to define our terms, that is, limit ourselves to a definite part or aspect of their possible meaning, before we can use them safely in judgments upon things. If by nature or the flesh or the world we mean these in their normal condition or action, as they ought to be, it is absurd to ask whether they are good. Whilst they are all capable or susceptible of untold evil, they are equally the conditions and the very matter or material of all our possible good. If they are good, they are good; if they are bad,

they may be very bad. The flesh as a natural constituent part of us, our true nature, is good; our flesh in its actual condition and action in us all is in none of us good, — a fact which we express by saying that no man is free from sin in the flesh.

This very term lust, which has acquired for us so strong an emphasis of evil, does not, in its Greek equivalent at least, necessarily involve that notion. The distinction has been made in the will which is the essence of our manhood, between the will of reason and the will of sense or sensibility. As a matter of fact, how are our wills moved or determined? Are they not primarily by our natural instincts, impulses, propensions, our appetites if they are of the body, our desires if they are more of the mind, our affections if they are of our social nature? Now all these are of the flesh and constitute the flesh. What element of the flesh could we possibly spare? What one of them is not an integral part of our natural good? But there is another will, or another aspect or function of the will, which is not of the flesh; that is, it is not moved or determined by sense or sensibility; it has been called, as I have said, the will of Reason. Reason in the man represents the man himself, in the totality of his spiritual, moral, and personal manhood, as over against and often in conflict with the blind suggestions and inclinations of his mere nature or flesh. The Greeks called the true will of the man, or of reason *βούλησις*, and the will of sense or of mere nature they called *ἐπιθυμία*. And they said that the true will of

reason is always *τὸν ἀγαθόν*, of the good, whereas the will of sense or inclination is simply of its object, without regard to such higher goods as prudence, or righteousness, or holiness — that is to say, the proper goods of the natural, the moral, or the spiritual reason. The business or end of a man is the harmony of the two wills, not merely the subjugating or subduing the lower to the higher, but assimilating and identifying it. We have not done enough in violently denying and controlling our passions; our business is to rationalize, moralize, spiritualize them.

To return to our argument, the lusts spoken of by St. James and others do not mean any longer simply our natural appetites, desires, affections, or passions; certainly they do not mean these harmonized with reason, or sanctified by spirit; it means these uncontrolled by spirit or by reason, excessive, perverted, degraded, and as such made our own by our own self-surrender to them and self-indulgence in them. It is in this sense that we are drawn away by our own lust and enticed. Sin is only ours as we have ourselves made it our own. It is no sin to be tempted as Jesus was tempted at every point. On the contrary it was the condition, the means, the instrumental cause of all His human holiness. But to be tempted as St. James means it, by our own past indulgence in and personal complicity with sin, by our own lusts, in that sense it is sin not only to yield to temptation but to have been tempted.

(When we say that Jesus was tempted at all points

like unto us, without sin, we mean two things. First, there was no sin in His being tempted; no part of His temptation came from previous sin in Himself. The prince of this world who finds in us, in our past sins, abundant footing for future operations, could find nothing in Him. The *obstare principiis* was so effectual in Him, that sin remained for ever on the outside; there was no such thing in Him as *His own lust*. And as He never sinned in the being tempted, so He never sinned in being overcome by the temptation. His significance in humanity is expressed in the fact that He was all-tempted yet all-sinless. In that, He was the conqueror and the destroyer of sin and of death.

V

THE ELEMENTS OF HIGH PRIESTHOOD IN GENERAL

Hebrews 5-6

WE come, with the fifth chapter of our Epistle, to begin the more immediate, though still gradual and progressive, definition of the meaning and function of high priesthood. And let us remember that our Author's method, while it is both, is yet more a definition of all past expressions of high priesthood by its antitype and fulfilment in Christ, than a definition of this latter by the inadequate types of it that had preceded. The method, in a word, is based upon the principle that beginnings are better explained by ends than ends by beginnings. The divine truth of Jesus Christ and His work in humanity too far transcends any or all visible human pre-intimations or prophecies of itself to be expressed within the finite limits of their meaning. But the precedent high priesthood, seen now in the light of its divine fulfilment, is seen to go along with it in accord so far as it can.

“Every high priest, being taken from among men —” there is the prime condition. The use of the present participle (*λαμβάνόμενος* — instead of the aorist or the perfect) carries with it a force which I should not

attempt to express but for the existence of an illustration which may help to make it intelligible. The Church has adopted the expression anciently applied to our Lord as the "eternally begotten." Now the aorist or perfect passive participle would not express the meaning of begotten in that connection so well as the present passive participle would. The aorist would convey the idea that the act of begetting had taken place once for all in a supposed eternally past moment. The perfect would assert that the begetting is eternally past and finished. The real truth intended to be expressed is that the Son of God, not was or has been begotten an eternity ago, but is eternally being begotten. The Son was not and is not eternally separated from the Father, any more than the rays have been or are permanently separated from the sun; they are always separating and never separated. Now no figure or illustration will bear pressing too far, but the use of the present passive participle in the present case has a somewhat analogous force. The real high priest is not one who was or has been taken from among men; he is one who is always being taken from among men, who is continuously man, and continuously discharging the true function of humanity towards God.

The high priest, being thus taken from among men and being man, is appointed and stands for men in things pertaining to God. The high priest represents man in the completion and perfection of his relation to God. He is thus the expression to him of his religion. And the end of it is, "that he may offer both gifts and

sacrifices for sins." How truly and adequately that expresses the real function of religion, we may examine for ourselves in either or both of two ways: by studying the offerings and sacrifices of the Old Testament and interpreting them by themselves, or by studying the one actual offering and sacrifice of the New Testament for itself and using them simply as the figures and language prepared for the expression of it. I wholly repudiate the idea that the high priesthood and sacrifice of Jesus, while they are expressed in the terms, can be brought down to the limited meaning of anything that went before. We must use the terms only to translate them into truths and facts far above all human figures and language.

There is meaning and help, however, in the gifts and sacrifices of the Old Testament which I am, I hope, sufficiently far from underrating or understating. I have elsewhere developed my own conviction that the three great offerings and sacrifices of the Jews were truly intended to cover and include all that is essential in the function of religion or of worship. The peace-offering emphasizes and expresses the necessity of right relation with God. It indicates what that relation is by the act of making the common meal the sacrament of it. The common meal is the family act of the common life, the essential oneness of the father and the family. Oneness with God in a common life is the primary truth of religion.

The burnt offering or whole burnt offering adds the truth that life is service, that to live the common

life of God is to do the common work of God. We only live God's life as we are, like our Lord, wholly given to do His will. His meat and drink are not those of idleness but of devotion and consecration. Whoso is not wholly consumed by His zeal and spent in His service falls just so far short of the fullness of His life. Life and righteousness are identical terms.

Neither of these offerings takes account, or sufficiently emphasizes, the momentous fact of sin, the insuperable barrier between us and either service or peace or life. The sin offering or sacrifice is wholly concerned with the fact and problem of sin. It is named, for short, the *περὶ ἁμαρτίας*, the "about sin." Its function is not alone the acknowledgment or confession of sin; it is the whole question of sin. The immediate task of the sin offering is to bring the sinner into such an attitude with regard to his sin that, by repentance and confession, he may be capable of receiving pardon for it, may not lose his status with God in consequence of it. The ultimate end of the sacrifice for sin is such an attitude to sin as will be its actual putting or taking away.

Taking then the Hebrew terms, or figures, or acts in all their meaning that was to be, interpreting them by their ends or antitypes, how better can we express the function of priesthood then and of Christ's priesthood now than in terms of offerings and sacrifices for sin? But we pass by now anything further than the mere mention of the sacrifices in connection with Christ.

The next qualification and quality of the high priest is that he is capable of the most perfect sympathy or suffering together with us: "Who can bear gently with the ignorant and erring, for that He Himself also is compassed with infirmity." The ground or condition of his power of sympathy is his own experience of infirmity.

The sharing of our ἀσθένεια or weakness thus predicated of our Lord demands an examination of its meaning. St. Paul in describing the law and its righteous demand upon us, or its demand upon us for righteousness, speaks of the inability of the law to enforce or make good that demand, in consequence of its weakness, not in itself but through the flesh. No law of God is weak in itself; but where obedience or conformity to it is only through a subject other than it or Him, then the weakness of the subject is a weakness of the law, and even a limitation of God as through the law. We need not be afraid to say that God Himself cannot save us through the law, when the limitation lies in His own constituted nature of us, and not in Himself who can save us otherwise, as in fact He does through the Gospel.

This inability of the law through the flesh is, as we shall see, the very point of the future argument of our Epistle. In human experience law makes nothing perfect; there is need of quite another mode or process of human perfection. Now this weakness of the law is, in reality, not its weakness but ours. And the weakness is, primarily, not a mere consequence

of sin, but a deficiency of nature. Human nature is, in its very constitution and design, not once but twice deficient. Nature perfects no man, as it does things or animals. Only the man himself, in rational and free fulfilment of his nature, can perfect himself; his self or selfhood is non-existent save through that self-fulfilment. And then again our real and ultimate self-fulfilment, our truest and highest selfhood, cannot be accomplished of ourselves, through our mere self-fulfilment of our nature or our law. Man is not either constituted or intended to be himself without or apart from God. My highest and most real personality is not I but Christ, God in me, — and God in me not alone by His act but by mine also.

To what extent our *asthencia* is now, however, not mere deficiency but fault of nature; how much of it is the accumulated and consolidated effect of the long and universal reign of actual sin in the flesh; — is a more difficult question. I think we should reduce to a minimum our dogmatic speculations as to the possibility or propriety of things in this world having happened or being otherwise than they actually did happen and are. I fully recognize all the fact and meaning of the fall now, but the detailed imagination of a state before the fall once, or of such a state as a possible permanent and still existing one, has no warrant that I can find in the Scriptures. It is the same with regard to the conceit of an unfallen nature as assumed and lived in by our Lord in the days of His flesh. In describing the matter otherwise, or in simply another way,

I hope I shall be felt equally to safeguard all the truth involved.

What I think is necessary to begin with, in interpreting the Scriptures as well as in stating the Gospel, is to recognize the identity of our Lord with ourselves, in the deficiency of our nature, in the insufficiency of ourselves, and in every detail of our own external condition with regard to sin. The difference begins only with Himself and His own action in the nature and under the conditions. I will once more state it in the shortest and best words I can find for the purpose: Our nature or our flesh is sinful in all us, because we are all sinful in it; it was sinless in Him because He was sinless in it. There is a propriety in calling nature or the flesh sinful, since in our nature or by our flesh we cannot but be sinful, and since sinlessness in us, or holiness, can come only through denial, mortification, crucifixion of the flesh. But such so-called sin of the flesh is only the sin or fault of our nature not of ourselves, until we have so taken it into ourselves as to have made it our own. Suppose any one of us has not done so; has so resisted, denied, mortified, crucified it, as that it ever remains outside ourself; suppose, in addition, that just the having been in that relation to sin that we had to, and could, and did so resist and mortify and crucify it, was what was necessary to constitute and make possible our human sinlessness, in the sense not of negative innocence but of positive holiness, — what then? We might answer that that is an un-supposable case with regard to any

one of us; and so it is. But it is precisely what was the case with regard to our Lord. And if He had not been in just our exact state or condition as regards sin, up to the point of His own personal relation to it and attitude towards it, He could not have been our holiness or our salvation from sin. For our holiness is conditioned upon our being in just that anterior possible relation to sin upon which our sinfulness is; the one being the yielding to precisely that of which the other is the denial and the conquest.

There is no question but that the New Testament speaks consistently of our Lord's having taken sin upon Himself, and that in an actual sense. But the sin is never His own, because it is never made His own. It is always our sin, the sin of the world. By the fact of His incarnation or being in the flesh, by the fact of His being of one nature, in one condition, subject to one temptation with us, He took our sin up to the point of His own unique, decisive, and redemptive action upon it. Whereas we all are under sin to obey it, He took our sin upon Him to take it away. By His act, not so much in our stead as in our place, He broke its power and abolished its dominion. God sending His Son in the likeness, which means in the identity, of the flesh of sin, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; by His victorious holiness broke the power and destroyed the reign of sin; so that the righteous demand of the law, the law's demand of righteousness, might now be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.

We can see how our Lord fulfilled the peace-offering: offered to God the perfect gift of filial love, of unity of life with the Father and with the brethren. We can see how He fulfilled the burnt offering; how He spent and was spent in the service of God and man; how He was obedient unto death. The more difficult and delicate point is to see how He fulfilled the sin offering. And the enacting of the spiritual truth of the sin offering or sacrifice for sin is the pre-condition, the fore-act, of the rendering of either or both of the other two offerings.

The Apostle has been talking of the weakness or infirmity of the high priest, shared with us all, as the necessary qualification for his being our high priest, or truly representing us in our approach to God. And he goes on to say, On account of it, or on account of this — this *astheneia*, which is the thing here specially emphasized in the high priest — he is bound, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. What is meant by this necessity on the part of the true High Priest of offering for Himself as well as for the people, of offering for Himself first, before He could offer for the people? For remember we have here wholly a comparison, not a contrast. Every word indicates what is essential to the meaning and end of high priesthood, and what therefore characterizes the true High Priest.

We may illustrate the truth by the way St. John expresses it—without any reference on his part to the figure of the high priest. Our Lord is described by him as the revealer or manifester of Life, or The Life.

But He is manifested not merely as life-revealer but as life-worker and life-giver; He wrought or was the author of the life He manifests and gives. Now how did He do that? Why, by taking away sin, which is the one thing that can and does annul or destroy life. Death does not destroy life; in itself, and apart from sin, it is but birth into higher life. The devil cannot destroy or impair life; no external cause or hostile energy can do so. Nothing can injure life but our own act. The devil yielded to does injure it; but then the devil resisted and overcome ministers to and helps it. The cause of the injury or the help is our attitude or act in the matter, our sin or our victory over sin. Sin, then, is the one thing that can and does impair and destroy life. And our Lord works life for and in us by taking away sin and instituting and imparting holiness. We know that He was manifested to take away sin. And how did He do that? Why, first in Himself there was no sin. There was no sin in Him, not because He was God; not because as man his nature was in and of itself sinless, or incapable of sin, or because He could not sin, or because He could not be really tempted as we are to sin. Whatever truth there is in any one or all of these, as an historical matter of fact, as the fact is given in the New Testament, there was no sin in Him because He humanly resisted sin unto blood, because by the weapons of a man He overcame and destroyed sin in Himself.

How He destroyed sin in Himself, and with what weapons He did so, will presently appear and will

more and more appear. What alone I wish to say at this moment is that the act by which He did so, whether we look upon the lifelong act of His accomplished holiness or the culminating act of its completion upon the cross, that act was the perfect *περὶ ἁμαρτίας*, the perfect offering for sin. And that that act was for Himself first, and then for the people. He needed Himself first to work for and in Himself the righteousness and the life, which only then and thus could He either manifest or impart. The great fact to which we are gradually coming in our Epistle is that our High Priest, through the Eternal Spirit, offered up Himself without spot to God. That "without spot" is vital; it is not that He just so offered up Himself in perfect love and obedience, but that He first accomplished that which renders such love and service possible, by the taking away that which now renders it impossible. In order to do that, had He nothing to resist, nothing to deny, nothing to mortify and crucify? If so, then there was nothing in Him or in His temptation like us or ours. But all His resistances and victories were *ab initio* or *in principiis*; they were to sin without Himself. They could only have been to sin within Himself, if He had Himself first admitted sin within Himself. The completeness of His resistance and victory consists in His never having done so. But this whole account of the *rationale* of our Lord's sinlessness or sin offering will become more apparent when our Epistle comes in a few moments to illustrate it by reference to the facts of His life.

Another mark of the high priest is expressed in the words, And no man taketh the honour to himself, but as called of God. Besides the more apparent intention in these words, I have ventured to see in them a deeper sense which underlies the whole truth of the New Testament. The term called, or called to be, with reference to the divine call, expresses the fact that all that we are to God or from God is of Him and not of ourselves. We are called saints, or called to be saints, with the implication that no sanctification or sanctity can come from ourselves, but only from Him. We are holy only by invitation or call into participation in Him or His holiness. A called apostle is one whose message is God's immediate or direct message through him. Whom God foreknew and predestined, him He calls and brings into the secret and operation of His foreknowledge and predestination. The invitation or call indicates first the personal or free relation to it of man, and then the fact that the man is called to something outside himself, and to participate in something not himself. The High Priest indeed is He in whom the divine call or invitation of humanity is most perfectly answered and appropriated and most completely entered into and possessed. St. Paul prays that we may all know the hope of our calling and the riches of the glory of our inheritance; our High Priest knows and represents that.

We come now to illustrate in the actual facts of our Lord's life in the flesh the two notes of high priesthood which have been just emphasized, and in their reverse

order, first His call to the high priesthood, and then His participation in our *astheneia* or natural and human infirmity. "Christ also glorified not Himself to be made a high priest, but He that spake unto Him, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee: as He saith also in another place, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." It is not easy at once to see how the divine address, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee, constitutes a call or appointment to the high priesthood, but the Epistle makes it abundantly plain when we have come to look upon it as a matter of things rather than of words.

It will be enough for the present to anticipate a passage in which the Apostle sums up this part of the argument as follows: "For the law appointeth men high priests, having infirmity" — that is, under the power of sin, not having surmounted or transcended the consequence and condition of their natural *astheneia*; "but the word of the oath, which was after the law, appointeth a Son, perfected for evermore." The essence, constitution, and qualification of real and accomplished high priesthood consisted in having transcended natural and human *astheneia* in a way which is just the matter of the argument, a way which is here described as the realization, the completion and perfection, of sonship. A perfected son is one who, by the constituted and necessary process, yet to be explained, has perfectly appropriated and reproduced the nature and spirit of the father. One who has accomplished this perfect sonship perfectly represents humanity and

every man in the totality of his Godward relation, and is true High Priest. The passage does not describe our Lord as having been devoid of our natural and human *astheneia*, but as having passed beyond it by an act and process of self-perfection and of God-perfection, by the complete assimilation of the divine nature, spirit, and life — which is sonship.

It is not impossible nor untrue, in the several passages where the words are used, to interpret the “this day” of our Lord’s begetting as Son as referring to the timeless moment of His eternal begetting. But that would give no meaning here. Our Lord is consummated human high priest by the act in which He brings man to God, perfects him as son in his relation to God as Father. And that is by the act or process which cannot be better designated than as a resurrection which is also a regeneration, a dying into a new life. The other passage, the divine appointment by designation of our Lord as priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, may be reserved for fuller discussion in the next chapter.

/ We come next to illustrate the reality of our Lord’s high priesthood through participation in human infirmity. “Who, in the days of His flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him out of death, and having been heard for His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which He suffered; and having been made perfect, He became unto all them that obey Him the

author of eternal salvation: named of God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek." The divine meaning of human *astheneia* is found in the fact of man's absolute dependence upon God, dependence more particularly, since we are speaking in the sphere of the spirit, for all things that pertain unto life and godliness. There was never one who knew so completely as Jesus Christ the truth and the extent of this dependence. There was never one who expressed it so continuously and so strongly: He could do nothing, He was nothing, without His Father; His works, His life, His goodness, so supremely His own, were not His own. He knew that in nature, in self alone, without God, there was nothing but inevitable and certain sin, a sin which had for Him all the meaning or reality of death.

As He was the embodiment of this sense of dependence, so was He the embodiment of the spirit of prayer, which is its natural and necessary accompaniment and expression. His supplications and prayers with strong crying and tears were true experience and confession of His human inability to save Himself. He prayed to Him who was the only power able to save Him from, or out of, death. That did not mean only out of natural death. Jesus Christ knew that, in our nature, in the flesh, in Himself as man, there was no salvation from or out of all death but in and by God. And there was only one human way of that salvation, the way of faith; He perfected salvation by perfecting faith. Let us see more in detail, how He did that; for which we have abundant material in the case before us.

He was heard in His prayer for or because of His godly fear. Jesus Christ was the one instance in humanity of a perfect being heard because of a perfect hearing. He speaks constantly of His spiritual seeing and hearing. He does nothing but what He sees, and speaks nothing but what He hears. That is, the supernatural, the super-self that was the basis always of His own selfhood, was a perpetual sense and consciousness with Him. His own perfect hearing was at once effect and cause of His perfect being heard. And He was perfectly heard in the sense of receiving in response to His prayer all the divine grace necessary for His perfect salvation. But there is more detail than this involved in the meaning of the word *eulabeia* which we translate godly fear. The word means, exactly, right apprehension. The perfect faith of Jesus enabled Him to apprehend rightly all the details of God's dealings with Him. God said of the people in the wilderness who perished through unbelief, They did not know my ways. The perfect faith of Jesus knew God's ways. Faith might be very well described as a right apprehending or laying hold upon, and holding on to, the right thing, — which is always God or God's word.

A child prays naturally for anything and everything that seems good to him. There is no impropriety, in our ignorance, in our letting all our requests be made known unto God; whether or not they will, in His wisdom and goodness, be granted, the leaving them with Him will bring the peace that passeth all under-

standing, and that is the best keeping for our hearts and minds. St. Paul, and even our Lord, prayed for what could not be granted. But God often hears and grants best in not granting. The more mature and disciplined our prayer, the more we realize that the end and success of prayer is the knowing and choosing and loving God's ways. If in the hard and painful discipline of life we learn how to bear the thing we ought to bear, and do the thing we ought to do, and become the thing it is all designed and divinely adapted to make us, then we have learned that *eulabeia* which perfectly assures our being heard and being answered unto the perfect salvation from all death.

The Apostle adds that thus our Lord, though He was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which He suffered. There are degrees of meaning and of interpretation in this. In the first place, this is true of all sonship. I have before expressed the fact that even with our purely human sonships the being sons does not save us from the necessity or absolve us from the duty of becoming sons. No personal relation of mere nature is more than potential, it has not become actual, until it has been born into action, has been converted into a relation of personal act and habit and character.

We may go further and say that, however essential and eternal, in the very nature of God, may have been, and was, the divine Sonship which incarnated itself in Jesus Christ, yet in Him as human sonship it had to realize or actualize itself by the necessary

course and process of human sonship. Although He was Son, yet our Lord had to become Son of God by the acts and character which constitute human sonship to God, and without which man, however he may be *potentiâ*, is not *actu* son of God. The learning, the having learned sonship, the personal becoming, and having become sons, the act of ourselves and character of our own performed and acquired in the process, all this is integral and necessary part in any being sons that is possible for us. And the divine love and wisdom shows us in the person and experience of Jesus Christ that the learning, the acquiring and attaining, the accomplishing and becoming, are all impossible without the necessary concomitant of toil, pain, and suffering on our part. We can begin to see that, and we shall some time altogether see it, for ourselves. Even prior, logically, to the fact of sin, every real act of love, of choice, of service, of freedom, involves something of the nature of denial, surrender, sacrifice. Include the universal fact of sin, and all virtue, righteousness, or holiness involves the beginning and the unending persistence of a process which always means and can effectually terminate in nothing short of the complete death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Only in that supreme and extreme act was Jesus Himself perfected Son of God, and only in it and in Him can we be perfected sons of God.

And having, by His own faith and obedience unto death, been made perfect, He became unto all that believe and obey Him the author and cause of eternal

salvation. The masculine and so personal form of the word cause, which the Greek alone gives us, (*αἷτιος*), identifies Jesus Himself more intimately and personally with the act and fact of our salvation than can well be expressed in any other language. He is not the abstract and formal cause, He is the concrete, active, real cause of it; He has not so much caused or effected it as He Himself is it. Once more adds our Author — “Called or named of God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.” But still not yet is he ready to expatiate upon the significance of that order or title. He must first, by practical exhortation, stimulate and provoke his readers to higher efforts and reaches of thought and life before they can be aroused to the pitch of spiritual and moral comprehension necessary for so high an argument, “Of whom, he says, we have many things to say, and hard of interpretation, seeing ye are become dull of hearing.” Whereas they have had time to have become teachers, they have still need to be themselves taught the very rudiments of the Gospel. They are incapable of solid food and need to be fed with the milk of babes. The babe is he who is without experience of the word of righteousness. Full-grown men for whom is solid food are they who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discriminate good and evil.

VI

FROM FIRST PRINCIPLES TO PERFECTION

Hebrews 5-6

THE thing needed in understanding the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of spiritual and moral appreciation or apprehension, the power to apprehend that for which also we are apprehended of Christ Jesus. This power is more a practical or moral than it is, also, a theoretical or intellectual one. The babe is he who is without spiritual experience. Experience of what? Why, of the *logos* or law, the method or process, of human righteousness.

The righteousness of nature, the righteousness of self or of the law or of works, the righteousness of grace, of God, of faith; in general the whole question of righteousness, and even more the how than the what of it, this is the real and essential question of the Gospel, not only with St. Paul but with every interpreter of the Gospel in the New Testament. And the question, especially of the how of righteousness, is one not so much of speculation, or even of observation, as of personal experience. The deficiency of nature, the insufficiency of ourselves, the impotency of the law, the sufficiency of grace, the divine power of the fellowship and sympathy and help of God Himself

in Christ, all these are not deductions of thought but simple verifiable facts of moral experience. The consequence is that the mature Christian, the full-grown spiritual man, is he who by actual use and exercise has had his spiritual senses and perceptions, his moral reason and judgment and apprehension, trained and disciplined not only to think and talk about but to prove and test and verify the way of righteousness. The senses exercised to discern, not truth or falsehood, but good and evil, indicates a knowledge not of words or of thoughts but of things and of life.

There is an interesting summary next of what were accounted at the beginning of the Gospel to be the first principles of Christ, the rudiments and fundamentals of faith or of the Gospel of grace; but our theme is rather of the perfection than of the elements of Christ, and we can touch only briefly upon them. And I shall do so with reference rather to their inward principle than their outward form. Repentance from dead works is not alone renunciation of sin or of sinful works. It is something deeper than that; it is renunciation of nature, or of the flesh, or of ourselves as the possible source or power of holiness or righteousness or life. It is the felt and known experience of the fact that in ourselves or in the flesh we are dead as regards the life of the spirit, simply for the fact that the life of the spirit comes not from ourselves or our flesh but from God. The flesh, sinless in itself, is sinful in us, because we are incapable of being sinless in it. The

second fundamental, faith toward God, is supplementary to and explanatory of the first. It means here a definite and specific faith toward God, which is brought out more clearly in a later parallel passage in our Epistle. There the blood of Christ is described as cleansing our conscience from dead works to serve a living God. Over against the consciousness of the deadness and inefficacy of ourselves and of our best efforts is placed the experience of the power of a living God. It is as when St. Peter says that God raised Christ from the dead and gave Him glory, so that our faith and hope might be in God; that is, so that we might see in Christ God's life out of our own deadness. Or it is, as St. Paul says, that we have the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead. The negative consciousness of the deadness and inoperativeness of even our own good works, of mere nature or of self, is supplemented by the positive experience of the efficacy and power of the Spirit and grace of God in Christ.

The second two fundamentals are the doctrine of baptisms and the laying on of hands. Without going into any detailed consideration of these as distinctive Christian rites or ordinances, we may deduce from them what must of necessity be the meaning and function of all Christian ordinances and institutions. Any teaching of baptisms must be upon the line of that first questioning of John the Baptist's disciples about purifying. Practical Christianity has first of all to do

with the personal relation of believers with the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.

All questions of purifying or teachings about baptisms must terminate in that essential and necessary truth of Christian Baptism, which would be just as much a truth though there had never been instituted any outward ordinance of baptism. That truth is that we must be in Christ, and not only so, but we must be in Christ's death and resurrection, for purifying and cleansing. There is no purging from sin save in His death to it and life from it. As faith supplements repentance, the one being the life to God which is the death of sin, and the other the death to sin which is the life of God, so the sacramental significance of the laying on of hands turns more upon the divine side of the gift of spirit and grace, while baptism dwells more upon the human side of repentance and faith, of death and resurrection; but between them they cover the essentials of the first principles of Christ as applicable to us in our life upon earth.

The fourth and fifth fundamentals refer to the principles of Christ rather as they apply to us after death; they may be of those heavenly things of which St. John speaks when he says, If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, — he had been talking of baptism and the new birth and life of the Spirit, — how shall ye believe, if I tell you heavenly things? These heavenly things, of a future resurrection from the dead and eternal judgment, we shall not venture here to more than mention.

Let us now, says the Apostle, leave behind us these first principles of Christ, and press on unto perfection. There is a double practical exhortation intended. In the first place the readers are urged to higher efforts and powers of apprehension. These are things that have to be learned not by the ear only, or with the mind only, but in the life, and through the actions and passions of real experience. In fact, everything is contained already in the first principles. We have learned it all in our catechism. The progress to which the Apostle exhorts us is not in the truth to be apprehended, it is in the way and in the degree in which we apprehend it. Long ago we were carefully instructed in all the articles of the Christian faith. Long ago, perhaps, — I hope, — we took Christ to our minds as a true and beautiful ideal; more than that, to our hearts as a deep and tender sentiment; more still, into our wills and purposes as a principle and law of action and character. All these were right and necessary in their turn and in their order, but none of them was more than a beginning or a further step in the process of the true apprehension of Jesus Christ.

There is very much true knowledge of the ear, and of the head, and of the heart, and of the will or of the intention, that is still very far short of what the Apostle desires in his disciples of what he calls experience of the word of righteousness, that is, life-knowledge of the way, the *logos*, the law or process, of the life of God in us. These very things that are all in our catechism, that are on our tongues,

that are in our heads, that are a good deal in our hearts, that are even more, in a way, in our wills and our intentions, — how much do we really apprehend them in our lives, that is to say in what we suffer or do, what we are or are day by day becoming? Destiny comes only through character; character comes only through habits of our own formation; habits come only through acts of our own performing; instruction, ideas, sentiments, desire, will, purpose, all these are only antecedents and approaches to the real life-process of apprehending and knowing Christ.

So this perfection of which our Epistle makes so much is not perfection in the truth; the truth is already perfect; it is perfection in us through our perfect apprehension of the truth. And the perfection, I repeat, is no mere head or heart or will perfection; what are all these but mere organs or potentialities of life; real perfection is not something projected in the organ, but something fulfilled in the function, that is to say, in the life itself. Our author is not interested even in priesthood or sacrifice, which is the letter and matter of his whole argument. What he is concerned about is the facts and truths of life and of experience, which he finds these the best figures for expressing, the best vehicles for conveying to the apprehension of his readers. He wants to translate these mere figures or vehicles into truths of life and experience for his brethren, but how can he do so if they have no life or experience of their own for the apprehension of them. The completeness or perfection of his exposition can only, for them at

least, go step by step with their progress in understanding, which is their growth in life.

May it not be that the solemn and impressive warning which follows, against standing still or going backward in the spiritual life, is to be explained on the lines we have been indicating? How, we may ask, is it possible that those who were once enlightened, and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, could then fall away? The answer may be that there may be an enlightenment not deeper than the mind or the understanding, a tasting only with the feelings or the sentiments, a participation of the Holy Ghost to the extent of a genuine and powerful drawing of the will and shaping of the intentions, a lively appreciation of the beauty and goodness of the word of God, and an actual experience of the powers of the world to come, and yet that all these have not as a whole penetrated deeper than what have been described as the outworks and approaches of life itself. Which of all these have not ourselves known, felt, tasted, experienced somewhat of? How much do our lives, ourselves within all the outward organs and activities of ourselves, know of the completeness, the perfection of Christ? And the thing to be learned is that the gist and rub of life consists, as Bishop Butler says, in the passage from passive impressions to active principles, in the conversion of ideas, sentiments, desires, and purposes into actual habit and character and personality.

Attention has been drawn by Bishop Westcott to the significance of the fact that "in the enumeration of the divine gifts received by those who are conceived as afterwards falling away there is no one which passes out of the individual. All are gifts of power, of personal endowment. There is no gift of love." The writer goes on immediately to disclaim any assignment of his readers to the category he has been describing: "But we are persuaded of you, beloved, better things, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak: for God is not unrighteous to forget your work and the love which ye showed towards His name, in that ye ministered unto the saints, and still do minister." Bishop Westcott goes on to remark of this that it was the presence of love among the Hebrews, to whom he is writing, which inspired the Apostle with confidence concerning them. It recalls the sayings of our Lord in which He enumerates the wonders possible to be wrought in His name by those of whom nevertheless in the end He should say, Depart from me; I never knew you. And also St. Paul's list of the possible personal endowments, the tongues of men and of angels, the gift of prophecy and knowledge of mysteries, even the faith to remove mountains, the liberality to feed the poor, and the zeal to give the body to be burned, and all without that charity, that practical love, without which everything else is unprofitable and dead. Even love itself to Himself alone, if it were possible, God in Christ would not accept: If ye have not done it to every the least of these my brethren, ye have not done

it unto me. We have not applied the principles and attained the perfection of Christ until we are what God is.

The Apostle recognizes the essential of love in his brethren; but the beginnings, the degrees, are not enough: "We desire that each one of you show the same diligence unto the fulness of hope even to the end: that ye be not sluggish, but imitators of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Who through faith and patience inherit, — the condition of faith, the birth and growth and perfection of faith, is inseparable from the lifelong exercise of long-suffering, endurance, the power of deathless survival. The correlative and producing object and cause of such a faith is the divine certainty of the promises. And the typical experience of Abraham furnishes the illustration and expression of that certainty: "And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham a second time out of heaven, and said, By Myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, because thou hast done this thing, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thee; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." In the womb of that promise was borne, and in the fulness of time was born all the richer promise and gift of life in Christ.

"When," says the Apostle, "God made promise to Abraham, since He could swear by none greater, He swore by Himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And

thus, having patiently endured, he obtained the promise. God, being minded to show more abundantly unto the heirs of the promise the immutability of His counsel, interposed with an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have a strong encouragement, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us." The essential point in the matter is not that God swore, but that He swore by Himself. Abstract the outward fact of the oath, which is but an anthropomorphic figure for a deeper reality, and it means that behind the sanctity of the promise as such to humanity of final inheritance, there is the prior and deeper sanctity of God Himself, God's own eternal nature of goodness and love, to validate the promise and establish it for ever. The sanctity of the letter of the promise rests upon the underlying sanctity of the eternal spirit of the Promiser. God cannot be untrue to His promise, because He cannot be untrue to Himself.

"The hope set before us, then, we have as an anchor to the soul, a hope both sure and stedfast and entering into that which is within the veil; whither as a forerunner Jesus entered for us, having become a high priest after the order of Melchizedek." There can be no question of what the hope is, as to its content or subject-matter. There can be no real end of hope for us but that of personal perfection; and when the perfection of self has been once fully identified with the perfection of love and of service, there is no danger because no possibility of making that an egoistic or

selfish end. It is only another expression of the personal salvation of finding through losing oneself, of getting through giving our life.

This hope already realized in the personal perfection of Jesus Christ, as object-lesson, as potential cause, as personal substance of our own perfect life in Him, we have as an anchor to the soul. The anchor by its own fixedness in its place fixes securely to the same place that which is firmly attached to it. Faith in Christ's perfection assures our perfection. We are without, but He is within the veil. The at-one-ment with God, the redemption from sin, the resurrection from death, the eternal life of God, are all ours only as yet in faith, in hope; but all that we are still without, He is wholly within. And the faith which attaches us to Him is the securest of cables, because the strength of its fibre is the love and grace, the very soul of the power, of God. Christ is where He is in the capacity of our forerunner; He is ourselves gone before, whom we have only to be true to ourselves in order to follow after.

And now again, at the close of this third section, the Apostle returns to his refrain, — Having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. But now he is to take up his parable in earnest, and proceed to the task of its elucidation. Let us hope that his hearers, or readers, have been aroused by his exhortation to at least new determination to bring to his interpretation a more practical and active power and capacity of apprehension on their part. There is no history or

biography of Melchizedek in the world's records. If there were, it would no doubt spoil the use of his name for the purposes of our Epistle. He would then have had an earthly genealogy, a beginning of days and an end of life. The way in which he enters into and passes out of not actual existence but historical record, his phenomenal, once for all, stereotyped appearance in the clouds of tradition, enables us to abstract from the picture of him everything but what is wanted of him as type or symbol. Let me repeat that our Author is not interested in fulfilling the Old Testament in the New; His effort and aim is to illustrate and express the New Testament through the only medium of his time, the ideas and images and even fancies of the Old Testament. We are to take Melchizedek simply as he uses him, without learned or laborious questioning of who or what Melchizedek was. Taken in this way, Melchizedek becomes to us a transcendent and glorified expression, a heavenly abstraction, of all that was concrete in his person, or of all that was visible in the record as concrete. Everything unnecessary is stripped off, and he stands as the idealized and exalted essence of not only Hebrew but universal kingship and high priesthood combined. For Melchizedek is of an older type than the Hebrew. It has long been remarked that the Most High God of whom Melchizedek was priest unites in His name the pre-Hebraic and the Hebraic titles of God, or at least the titles are combined in the account of the appearance. The primitive and universal type of high priest in its highest majesty in

the person of Melchizedek transmits his blessing to the Aaronic priesthood yet in the loins of Abraham.

The father, the head of the tribe, the king, was the natural priest or high priest also. It was not only an actual fact that it was so at the first, but there is an ideal reason why it should be so. Bishop Westcott quotes Philo as saying in substance that "such a combination must exist in the ideal state. He who unites with the Unseen must direct action. He who commands the use of every endowment and faculty must be able to consecrate them. He who represents man to God with the efficacy of perfect sympathy must also represent God to man with the authority of absolute power."

The practical impossibility of realizing upon earth the working ideal of a priest-king or a king-priest may be paralleled by the impracticability of Carlyle's ideal conception of the King by divine right of what his name implies. Indeed Philo makes Melchizedek the symbol of the power of rational persuasion: "Let the tyrant be called ruler of war, but the king, prince or leader of peace, *i.e.*, Salem. And let him offer to the soul the food of gladness and joy; as Melchizedek offers the bread and wine."

We are witnessing another parallel impossibility of earthly realizations of heavenly or divine ideals, the failure in fact, of the truth in idea of the church-state or the state-church. No doubt it was age-long experiment and general failure of the older ideal that led to the dissolution of the union in one person of the functions of king and priest. Such dissolutions

are in progress still with no prospect of reintegration upon earth.

And so we witness in the Hebrew polity first the separation of the priest and the king, and afterwards more painfully still that of the prophet and the priest. But it is the weakness and sin of men that render all such ideal combinations impossible as working systems; and although we shall never attain perfection by merely establishing outward institutions of perfection, yet when in God's way and time the perfection comes it will bring with it the perfect outward institution of itself. For Philo's ideal, however impossible as an actual now, is nevertheless true as an ideal. And when the ideal comes as an actual, it will be that of prophet, priest, and king all in one: He who truly and perfectly unites us with God as Priest will be He too who shall be able to direct our actions as King. He who commands the use of every endowment and faculty will be able to consecrate them. He who represents man to God with the efficacy of perfect sympathy will equally represent God to man with the authority of absolute power. Truth and Love and the power of a perfect Righteousness and Life combine in Him to make Him all in One our Prophet, Priest, and King. And as He is one for us, so shall we be all one in Him. As the King will be the Priest, so shall the State be the Church, and Earth shall be Heaven.

Let me once more call attention to the reiterated expression, *become* high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. Melchizedek as he hovers before us

between heaven and earth, between the ideal and the actual, as combination of both, undoubtedly presents to us the appearance of a twofold eternity, an eternity of the past as well as of the future. Jesus Christ was High Priest from the beginning, inasmuch as He always represented in God not only the ideal truth and destiny of creation and of man, but also all the future process of the ages through which that truth was to be realized and that destiny accomplished; but the truth had to be realized, and the destiny to be accomplished by the necessary and appointed process, and it is the process in which we are involved and with which, therefore, we are concerned, and consequently it is that which our Epistle constantly keeps before us. The point with us is, How did Jesus become actually, not how was He always ideally, our High Priest; and how are we to enter not ideally but actually into the accomplished work of His high priesthood, which means, into the accomplished fact of our oneness with God, our redemption from sin, our resurrection from death, our possession of eternal life?

It is to be observed that in this matter of process and detail Melchizedek sheds no light upon our subject. He stands only for the consummated fact or result; nothing is said of his priestly functions, of wherein his high priesthood consisted or how its powers were acquired or exercised. It is simply the name and the fact, but no act, of his high priesthood which is given in the primitive record or referred to in our Epistle. Abraham returning from his victory over the

invading kings and his rescue of his brother, Lot, was met as follows: And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was priest of God Most High. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be God Most High, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hands. And he (Abram) gave him a tenth of all. Even the bringing of the bread and wine, however significant it happens to be, and however we may be tempted to connect it with an act of priestly offering or sacrifice, neither the narrative of the Old nor the reference in the New Testament gives us any warrant for interpreting in that way. It seems to have been only an act of friendly hospitality and ministry to bodily needs; or at most a part of the blessing which the priest-king bestows upon Abraham. And this blessing expresses all of high-priestly function mentioned in the transaction or in our use of it. High-priestly blessing indeed includes everything; and there is no limit to that everything. But it includes it implicitly; when we want to know what it is explicitly or in detail, we have to return from the ideal abstract of the Melchizedekian to the concrete actual of the Hebrew high priesthood for the images, figures, and language necessary to express it. This, as I have implied before, does not derogate from the use or the value of the nebulous and indefinite figure of Melchizedek, but rather enhances it. We ought not to stretch the figure beyond its use, and it is fortunate that we have no data or material with which to stretch it.

In Psalm 110, Jehovah is represented as addressing and blessing a theocratic king: The Lord saith unto my lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. As the blessing and the promises connected with it proceed, priestly endowments and functions are added to the royal ones: The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, 'Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. There is no scripture that was accepted as more distinctly messianic than that.

What do we mean by messianic? We mean that underneath all the really significant forms and figures and letters of the Old Testament, and of religion before and outside of the Old Testament, there are universal, eternal, divine truths and facts; that there is a more real and abiding law and prophecy than that of Moses, a more real kingship than that of David, a more real priesthood than that of Aaron. The truth is more than any finite or temporary embodiment of it; and any finite embodiment of it must be a temporary and transient one. No embodiment of the truth will be permanent and eternal until it is the perfect, the divine one, until it is the personal Incarnation of the Most High God Himself. The Messiah is the real Prophet, the real Priest, the real King, that all others mean; He is the ideal divine in the actual human, God Himself in man. The Old Testament law passes away, but Law does not pass away; the Old Testament circumcision is abolished, but the truth of circumcision is not abolished; Christ is the true

circumcision of the spirit; the sacrifices of the Old Testament are no longer practised, but it is because the real sacrifice of Christ has taken their place; the earthly rests of the Old Testament are no longer promised, but there remaineth a rest. There is still a real Abraham, a real Moses, a real David, a real Aaron. And when heaven and earth shall pass away and our temporal humanity with it, there will be a new heaven and a new earth, and a new Adam, and a new righteousness, and a new life.

What better type or symbol could there be of the absolute, the everlasting, because the divine, high priesthood and kingship than that phenomenal figure of Melchizedek? He comes out of the invisible, timeless eternity of the past; he belongs to the timeless assured eternity of the future; He is High Priest forever. He is source and fountain of all high-priestly blessing, that is of all blessing of divine love and sympathy and fellowship, of divine service and sacrifice and salvation. Melchizedek blesses Aaron in the loins of Abraham. He blesses the blesser; he is the high priest of the high priest; he is the type and symbol of the Source and Original of all the finite and partial human blessers and blessings of men. And Aaron in the loins of Abram pays tithe and homage to him as his own high-priestly Source and Original. Let this suffice as a preparation for the fuller and more detailed discussion in the next chapter of the symbolic significance of Melchizedek, priest of the Most High God.

VII

THE REALIZATION OF HIGH PRIESTHOOD IN CHRIST

Hebrews 7-8

WE come now to study more in detail the several points in the brief record which make Melchizedek so apt a type and expression of the true great High Priest. In the first place, says the Apostle, Consider how great this man was, unto whom Abraham gave a tenth out of the chief spoils, Abraham the patriarch. And not only hath he taken tithes of Abraham, but he hath blessed him that bath the promises. One of the most notable features of our Lord's teaching, as in the Sermon on the Mount, is that He always teaches the law as one who is Himself above the law, or rather, who is Himself the law: Ye have heard that so and so, but I say unto you. Well, here our Author sees in Melchizedek the type of one who is above the promises, and therefore above all the bearers of the promises, nay, who is Himself the Promise, the source and original and content of all promise from God and all promise to man.

The real meaning and point is not the greatness of Melchizedek, of whom nothing is known; and that, for all the efforts that have been made to prove

that Melchizedek was himself some great one, of this or that superhuman dignity. We need all the time to remember that we are not interpreting or verifying the Old Testament, but seeking in it to find ideas, figures, and terms wherewith to express the facts and truths of the New Testament. The point is the greatness of the true and real great High Priest, who is the Source and Content of all divine-human blessings, and the Original and Archetype of all human blessers. How great indeed is our true Melchizedek, in the mind of our Apostle and this Epistle? That is a question with which the Epistle begins and ends: greater than the angels, greater than Abraham, greater than Moses, Joshua, Aaron, the prophets, — *how* great? We have not in as yet all the evidence, and the answer must wait for the close and the summing up.

The second point in the remarkable aptness of Melchizedek as a type of our Lord consists, of course, in his exact office, or combination of offices, as priest-king or king-priest. This has been, perhaps, sufficiently dwelt upon in the last chapter. But now we come in the third place to note an equal typical propriety in the personal name and the official title of the priest-king. Is it an accident, or a mere chance coincidence, that the king of Salem should have been named Melchizedek, or that Melchizedek should have been the king of Salem? We shall not stop to discuss that. The ancient record merely records very simple facts, without an appearance of suspicion of what is to be their significance in the far distant future. But,

as a matter of fact, what a significance there is; and how strange it is that this so brief record should contain so many such significances! King of Righteousness as to person, and King of Peace as to office and function, — could there be a more inspired or a more inevitable and infallible characterization of the true Great High Priest?

Let us try to take it in. Righteousness and Peace — do we not realize that the great truth and end of all the Gospel of God, of all the high priesthood and sacrifice of Christ, of all the mission and ministry of the Holy Ghost, is just this two-edged fact of the word of God and the truth of man, — the fact, first, of eternal righteousness as the only condition or basis of peace, and, secondly, of fundamental peace with God as the only hope or source of righteousness. Each is alike cause and consequence only of the other, and it was the sole sacrificial function and act of our only Great High Priest to bring righteousness and peace together in the supreme fact of our accomplished salvation. We need here only briefly to recall the mutual interactions and relations of righteousness and peace. In the first place, there is the universal fact, rooted in the very nature of things, that there can be no peace without righteousness. Nothing can truly rest until it rests in its own completeness and perfection, whether it be the acorn restless until it is an oak, or man incapable of resting until he finds his rest, that is, his completion and perfection, in God through Christ by the Holy Ghost. Righteous-

ness here means real righteousness, and peace real peace. There shall be no rest or peace for man until he is perfect as God is perfect. None can know the rest or peace of God until he has wrought the work of God. To rest as God rests, he must work as God works.

But then, on the other hand, it is equally true that, as there is no peace without prior righteousness as condition, so for us there can be no righteousness without prior peace as condition. Before we can be in God in righteousness we must be in God for righteousness. And it is the great achievement of our High Priest that He has brought us into such a relation to God in Himself for righteousness, through faith as a divine means to it, through peace and fellowship with God as a source and cause of it, as to ensure to us in the end the real righteousness, the righteousness in fact, which is the ground and the cause within ourselves of the real peace. If it is the priesthood of our Lord, that by sympathy and suffering with us, by dying the death to sin and living the life to God, has wrought the righteousness and paid the price of the peace, it is His kingship, His victory over sin and death, His session at the right hand of God, with all our enemies put for ever under His feet, through which shall actually reign in us the righteousness and the peace purchased for us by His blood. The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

The next point of typical fitness or propriety in the

figure of Melchizedek is that he is represented without predecessor or successor, without genealogy, without known parentage, without visible beginning of days or end of life. Stript of all these accidents and accessories of ordinary human life and office, what remains? Of himself it is witnessed only that he liveth, of his function or office, that he abideth a priest continually. In this he is made like unto, he appears in the record to resemble, he becomes a most expressive type and figure of the Son of God. Expressed in terms then of this shadow of Himself, what are we to say of the Son of God? That, in person and in office, He has had no predecessor on earth; that, on the contrary, He was the predecessor of any or all who, in person or office, have in any way represented His person or discharged His functions in the world; that all divine blessing or blessedness is but reflection or emanation of Him; that He was before John the Baptist who came as His messenger before Him; that His gospel, His grace and truth, was before Moses' law; that before Abraham was, He is; that before Adam He was Man from heaven; and before the foundations of the earth He was the Lamb of God slain for the sins of the world.

It is, however, with special reference to Aaron that our Apostle more directly interprets the resemblance of Melchizedek to the real High Priest, the Son of God. The letter, the shadow, the law of the Aaronic priesthood having served its turn, had to be abolished before the spirit, the substance, the grace and truth and life, of the eternal high priesthood, and sacrifice could come

in to displace by replacing, to abolish by fulfilling them. There was a double practical purpose to be effected by the Epistle. First the Writer wishes to commend Christianity to the ancient and powerful Hebrew mind and prepossession by revealing its, more and better than, identity with the established high priesthood and sacrifice. He fully recognizes all the sacred meaning, use, and validity of the old institution. It is to be all abolished only by being all fulfilled. It has accomplished a most necessary part, and is to cease only because its part has been accomplished. Christ is not the contradiction of the ancient constitution; He is identified with it, as we shall see, in the highest and best sense in which the end is always the gist and essence of the means and the process. Jesus Christ as the end of the law for righteousness is the very proof and justification of the law. But, on the other hand, just because the old institution was what it had been, and what it ought to have been in order to serve its turn, now that its turn was served, now that it had itself prepared the way for what was to succeed it, that succession depended upon its making way for it. The Writer to the Hebrews is an able and powerful confederate with the Apostle to the Gentiles in getting the Law out of the way for the Gospel.

The Law and the Gospel do not differ as to their end. The end of both is righteousness, spiritual and moral or personal perfection. While they differ they cannot be said to be contradictory or opposed as to

their means. Obedience to the law does not exclude the need and use of grace; and salvation by grace does not abolish obedience to law, but on the contrary establishes it by enabling it. Perhaps St. Paul's long and bitter battle with the literal and narrow representatives of the old law had produced the impression of an essential and permanent contradiction between obedience to law and acceptance of grace, between works and faith. No doubt the contradiction has been much stressed and exaggerated since then in his name and by his authority, but it was very far from St. Paul's own meaning or intention. Not even our present sympathetic Writer to the Hebrews brings out more strongly and clearly than he the real identity of law and Gospel, and the fact that they are not opposing means to the same end but only different parts and stages of one and the same divine process or succession of means.

If, says our Apostle to the Hebrews, there was perfection through the Levitical priesthood (under which the people received the law, that is, the law of Moses, the law in its temporary and transient Jewish form) then, what need was there that another priest should arise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be reckoned after the order of Aaron? There is no doubt that there is much said of grace, and very much made of grace, in the Old Testament. The difficulty is that there is no effectual or effective provision made for grace in the Old Testament. The time was not come for it; the law had not sufficiently done its work.

The Old Testament is not the Law only but the Law

and the Prophets; which, we may say, speaking roughly, means that it is both law and gospel. There is such a mixture in it that we cannot always separate what is legal and what is evangelical. St. Paul now treats circumcision, its distinctive rite, as an ordinance of the law, making us debtors to do the whole law, and standing for the righteousness of works. And then again he speaks of circumcision as having been instituted before Moses or the Law, as having been received by Abraham as a sign and seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had had prior to his circumcision. Moses himself was prophet as well as law, evangelical as well as legal. The Holy Ghost was much older than the great day of Pentecost, just as the law given on Sinai has long survived it. But here is the point: Where in the Old Testament is the evangelical truth or fulfilment of circumcision provided for? Where is the evangelical relation to the law, as differing from the legal, made possible? The Gospel was in the Old Testament, but it was there only as Promise; and the very promise could be based, could be either put or understood and accepted, only on the ground of the inadequacy of the law which it was to supersede, and fulfil by superseding. John the Baptist expressed it all when, as the end of the whole Old Testament system, he says, I can baptize only with water. The signs and types and promises and prophecies were much, meant much and effected much, but there was a wide difference still between them and the realities for which they were preparing.

There was a change then to be made in the Old Testament priesthood and law, a change not only necessary in itself but foreseen and provided for by the old system which it was to supersede. What else was the meaning of these promises of another priesthood after a new order, and, as we shall see, of another and a better covenant to be mediated through it? The change of the priesthood, says the Apostle, carries with it of necessity a change of law. This change is what we have most clearly to consider, and we will do so in its several aspects. In the first place, there is the actual change of the priesthood: for He of whom these things are said belongeth to another tribe, from which no man hath given attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord hath sprung out of Judah; as to which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priests.

We may interject a little interpretation of our own, on the line of Philo. The real high priesthood has been transferred from the sacerdotal to the royal line. The priest-king is restored because the ideal is realized: He who represents man to God with the efficacy of perfect sympathy is He who also represents God to man with the authority of absolute power. And, continues the Apostle, what we say is yet more abundantly evident, if after the order of Melchizedek there ariseth another priest, who hath been made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life: for it is witnessed of him, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

There is a disannulling of a foregoing commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness (for the law made nothing perfect), and a bringing in there-upon of a better hope, through which we draw nigh unto God.

The change of the priesthood involves of necessity a change of the law. The law is changed in three several senses. First, the law of the constitution of the priesthood itself is changed. The Old Testament priesthood was most distinctly a positive and not a moral institution; it came into and continued in existence νόμῳ, and not φύσει, its being was by enactment and not by nature. Its worth or value was not in what it was, but in what it meant or represented. There was no special virtue in the tribe of Levi, and even if Aaron, like Moses, was chosen for personal qualification, the succession after him was based upon the mere accident of birth. They were priests after the law of a carnal commandment. The priest after the order of Melchizedek is, precisely on the contrary, one who has become so after the power of an endless, or indissoluble, life. He is high priest, not νόμῳ, but φύσει; by virtue of what He essentially is, and not of what he legally or officially represents.

The distinction is, however, never forgotten, to which I have called attention from time to time. What is meant by the power of an endless or indissoluble life? Endless or indissoluble has reference to the future, not to the past. Unquestionably an eternal life *a parte ante* as well as *a parte post* is

throughout the Epistle attributed to our Lord in His higher nature; but the life here spoken of is not that of His higher but that of His lower or human nature. It is not our Lord's divinity in which He is high priest, however that must be presupposed in what He is in His humanity as real high priest. He is our high priest in what He is in His own person in our nature, as our at-one-ment with God, our redemption from sin, our resurrection from death, our holiness, righteousness, and eternal life. The endless life is our life in Him, a life not only of which He was the author but of which He is the substance, the power of which is not only His own but ours in Him: He gives us the power as well as the right to be sons of God. Our great High Priest hath been made, or hath become, what He is to us by His, which is also our, conquest of sin and achievement or accomplishment of eternal life.

In the second place, the law which has been changed along with the change of the priesthood is not alone that of its own constitution; it is that of its administration. The function of the priesthood was to administer the law. What was the law which, as a matter of fact, it did administer? It was chiefly, if not exclusively, the ceremonial law, the law largely of circumcision and of sacrifice. Throughout the New Testament there is more or less confusion when the law is spoken of, whether the moral or the ritual law is meant. If it were not that the two were in fact and in practice so widely dissevered, there would be reason for their

being so confounded or identified. In truth they ought to be identical. Circumcision, however it may have become only a rite and a ceremony, was in fact also a moral command — *the* command which the moral law embodies and enjoins, Thou shalt not lust; the law of all purity, holiness, righteousness, real or eternal life. The law or laws of sacrifice, as we shall see, were just the embodiments of the principles which make true life and constitute the moral law, the principles of love, service, and personal unselfish devotion. There is only one law, whether it be civil, ceremonial, or moral, and that means righteousness; they are but different enforcements of the same obligation, different ways or means to the same end. But they are in practice widely dissevered, and the question might arise whether or to what extent the priesthood before Christ did administer the moral law, and not only the ritual or ceremonial law. In either meaning, the law which it administered was changed along with the change of the priesthood.

In the first place the ritual law had to be changed, and the important point is, wherein lay the necessity of the change? It did not lie in the fact that it was ritual, or that it was formal. Neither did it lie alone in the fact that the rites or the forms had become so widely severed from the spirit or the life. We can never in this world be emancipated from the use and the danger of forms. The truth or the law cannot come to us but under forms; and rites and ceremonies, by which we mean forms of truth or of law that appeal

to us through the eye or other senses, are no more liable to become merely formal than those which are more mental, or, as we sometimes fancy, more spiritual. Even if the whole ritual and sacrificial system of Judaism had retained all the morality and the spirituality that was contained in it by reason and right of its divine origin and source, the necessity for its abrogation would have been only, not the more real, but the more felt and acknowledged; because, at its best possible, it meant infinitely more than it could be or than it could accomplish.

In fact the ceremonial law was an advance upon the moral law, inasmuch as there was in it not only everything of law but something of promise or gospel. Circumcision, as has been mentioned, not only legally bound to the whole moral requirement of purity and righteousness, but it was a sign and seal to the promise of righteousness through faith in Christ. And so the sacrifices not only expressed the necessity and the demand for all the perfection of love, service, and personal devotion which they signified, but they implicitly promised another and more effectual source and power of all these than is to be found in oneself. They taught to look outside of self for a gift and grace of holiness and righteousness and life. But they did not give the outside source and power of which they spoke. How could the blood of bulls and goats, however it might signify it, be the actual taking away of sin and sanctification of life?

Even the Gospel in the Old Testament dealt only

with signs, which could mean infinitely more than they could effect. The difference between those sacrifices and that of Jesus Christ is all that between meaning and being, between shadow and substance, between promise and reality. Our Lord's miracles were perhaps always parables of the mode of operation of truth, law, and life. When He said to the impotent man, Arise and walk, the word meant something; and that is as far as it could have gone in any of our mouths. In addition it was a word of very definite command, and it commanded just what the man needed to do as his own bodily healing and health. Perhaps there was in the command, simply as such, something of promise. But the great and final fact was that it was a word of power and of self-fulfilment; the man, through faith in it, arose and walked. The third is just what Jesus adds to Moses or John the Baptist: There cometh one after me who shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with the power of holiness and life.

Suppose we strip from the law its ritual or ceremonial features; and leave behind only the spiritual and moral meaning and intent that underlay them. St. Paul in the Epistle to the Galatians, in which the law is treated in its most ceremonial aspect, says, If there had been given a law which could give life, or make alive, verily righteousness would have been of or by the law. By this he indicates that the end of even rite or ceremony is righteousness and life, and that these two are one. Now strip off everything but the most spiritual and moral truth of the law, and still

the law is for its great purpose weak and unprofitable and needs for its own sake to be abrogated and replaced. The more the law is reduced to itself, the higher, purer, severer it appears; the more necessary and imperative, the more divinely to be desired, but also the more hopeless, the more impracticable and impossible. By the law alone is nothing but the knowledge of sin and the experience of the weakness of the flesh. The term law applies with propriety only to those who are capable of being its subjects; it applies in our experience only to men, and for them it designates the mode of their own freest and highest personal activity, the perfection of their spiritual and moral life. In this sense, the law, while it prescribes and demands perfection as the condition and as the value and reward of life, while it denounces and inflicts evil and death and hell as the consequence and penalty of imperfection and transgression, yet, merely as law, can never bring or give the perfection it requires.

Man can never live by or upon a mere mode; he requires a substance. No mere prescription of manhood or virtue will make him a man; no categorical imperative of a moral law will make him righteous; no natural scientific ethical principle even of altruistic unselfishness and self-sacrifice, no abstract conception of love and goodness as the ultimate law of the universe, will ever make him what they all may mean or command. We want the substance God instead of the mode or abstraction Law, and not until the one in its weakness and unprofitableness is abrogated for

the other with its power and sufficiency will the end of all be fulfilled. There is a disannulling of the foregoing commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness (for the law made nothing perfect), and a bringing in thereupon of a better hope, through which we draw nigh unto God.

The Apostle returns to the incident of the divine oath as testifying to Jesus as the surety of a better covenant. As God had sworn by Himself in His promise of the blessing to Abraham, so in the institution of the Melchizedekian high priest, The Lord sware and will not repent Himself, Thou art a priest for ever! The oath, as we saw, is a human expression for the carrying back of the promise and its immutability to the divine nature and character. God sware by Himself: He is the Father of mercies, with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning; the word of the Lord endureth forever.

Finally, as to the contrast between the true high priest and those who had prefigured him, they were by death hindered from continuing; but He, because He abideth for ever, hath His priesthood inviolable and unchangeable. The personal abiding for ever is something more than merely the condition of our Lord's essential and inviolable high priesthood. The abiding, or continuing, or surviving, was in itself not a mere fact or incident, but an act, an act of perfecting and perfected life, an act of victory over sin and death which was just what constituted Him Son of God and High Priest of humanity. The human achievement of

life, through the human conquest and abolishing of sin, is first of all a *ὑπο μένειν* and a *μένειν*, an abiding under, an abiding through, and after, a survival, of all temptation. It is the omnipotence of faith, the inextinguishableness of hope, the deathless endurance of love.

Jesus Christ was the author and finisher, the perfecter, of these supernatural graces, and it was through them that He transcended the deficiencies and limitations of nature, exceeded the imperfections and insufficiencies of human will and effort, and so attained holiness and achieved life. His high priesthood rests upon what He was and is, and what He is is the product or result of what He did. He was made, or became, Son of God and High Priest by the victory in Him of the faith, hope, and love which are their constituent elements and their abiding substance.

And so we come to another of our Apostle's summings up: Such a high priest became us — suited our case and met our needs, — holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. These are all personal human qualities and qualifications. They sum up the human characteristics and character which are in themselves eternal life. The description is that of one who is not merely sinless as a fact, but whose sinlessness is an act, and that act the atoning, redeeming, regenerating, sanctifying, and saving act in and of humanity. We have now, in the remainder of this passage, reached a point and come to statements and expressions which necessitate a more exact investigation into the meaning of the

sacrificial act that goes under the name of the cross of Christ.

The Apostle continues his account of the high priest whom we needed and whom we have as follows: Who needeth not daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people: for this He did once for all, when He offered up Himself. For the law appointeth men high priests, having infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was after the law, appointeth a Son, perfected for evermore. There is so much of comparison or likeness expressed, and so much of contrast or difference involved, between the high priests before and the true or real High Priest, that we have to make our way between them with infinite circumspection. In the first place, it is clearly affirmed of each, as part of the likeness, that by reason or because of the infirmity inseparable from humanity he is bound, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins (Ch. V. 3).

The meaning of this, so far as we have been able to go, is simply this: that Jesus Christ had to fulfil the conditions and accomplish the act and fact of holiness first in Himself before He could do so in us, the people. St. John expresses the order: First, He was manifested to take away sin; this, secondly, He accomplished in His own person: in Him there was no sin: in the flesh of sin, He abolished sin in the flesh: His own perfected holiness was the condemnation and the abolition of sin; and then, in the third place, Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not; whosoever sinneth hath not seen

Him, neither knoweth Him; truly to know Christ is to know Him as the divine power not only of His own but also of our holiness. He is the power of our perfect holiness; any and all imperfection of holiness in us, in Him, is due not to deficiency of power in Him but to defect of vision and knowledge, that is to say of faith, in us. We are slow to be sanctified only because we are slow to apprehend and appropriate His power to sanctify. Sanctification at the best is a gradual and lifelong process, because our spiritual as all our faculties are subject to the law of growth, are progressive in their functions. Spiritual maturity comes only to those who by reason of use have had their faculties duly exercised in moral distinctions and decisions.

The difficulty in construing the comparisons and contrasts, the likenesses and differences, between the functions of the antecedent and imperfect high priests and the perfect High Priest is found in expressions which we must not blink, if we wish to get at and take in the whole truth. Not only was it said before that the high priest is bound, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins; but here it is repeated that our Lord needeth not to repeat His sacrifice, or daily, like those priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people: for this He did once for all, when He offered up Himself. In order to measure with equal hand the identity and the difference of the two acts, their repeated sacrifices and His single sacrifice, we shall have to go further into the details and meaning of them severally. And we shall

be better able now to interpret the acts of those high priests in the perfect light of the consummate act of the true High Priest, than we should be to understand His act in only the imperfect light of theirs.

The *περὶ ἁμαρτίας*, the sacrifice for sin of the Old Testament, was the most significant and expressive act of religion or of worship known to the world before Christ. Justly so, for the one question about human life or destiny is, What about Sin? Sin is the one thing that stands in our way, between us and ourselves, between us and everything else, between us and God. The act which names itself by that question, which undertakes or claims to be, in any sense, the solution of it, is, or professes to be, the essence of religion, the expression of worship. We have been now through the whole experiment and experience of the world upon that point, and in the light of what we believe, what we know to be the truth of God in the matter, we may undertake to interpret so much of that truth as was anticipated and contained in the sin-offering of the Jews.

The only ultimate and complete thing to be done about sin is to abolish it. Nothing will make us at one with God, with all things, and with ourselves, but the extinction of that which alone separates us from them. Sin can be abolished only by conquest; it can be extinguished in one only by one's own act. No one may abide sinless through mere innocence; sinlessness prior to or without the possibility, the opportunity, the temptation to sin, sinlessness save through the encounter,

the warfare, the life and death conflict to the very end, with sin is an impossibility for us. There are some things, there is one thing at least, which God can save us in and by and through, but not from; and that is the issue and the decision which we must make for ourselves between sin and holiness, between death and life. That cup may not pass from us except we drink it; that baptism we must be baptized withal. God cannot take away our sin except we put it away; we cannot put away our sin except God take it away. We do not divide the work of our salvation between ourselves and God; God does it all in us, and we do it all in Him. It would not be our salvation if He did it without us; neither would it be our salvation if we did it without Him, for we are ourselves only in our oneness with Him.

VIII

THE OLD AND NEW COVENANTS

Hebrews 7-8

THE Old Testament sacrifice for sin, if immediately it meant something short of the whole truth, yet in reality was building more wisely and meant better than it knew. It meant really all of both the putting and the taking away of sin. The sinner represented or enacted in the body of his victim his own death to sin, his own resistance unto blood or obedience unto death. That means his own repentance unto the very putting away or extinction of sin. The act transcended that, however, inasmuch as such a sacrifice of love and obedience is, because or by reason of the weakness of the flesh, a human impossibility. The provision of the victim introduces an evangelical feature, the element of grace. The offerer might see in it, if he saw all, the lack of his own power of sacrifice, not replaced or substituted, but supplied by God's gift and grace of sacrifice. Just as now, in our eucharist, we offer up to God first the perfect sacrifice impossible in or of ourselves, then receive from God the gift and grace of that sacrifice in ourselves, and finally, offer up ourselves a living sacrifice through the grace of the perfect sacrifice received. God does not lower His commands, nor

accept any substitute for our obedience. We have got for our own salvation to repent unto death and believe unto life. But He is gracious to command what He will when He gives what He commands; to exact of us the perfect act of sacrifice, when He imparts to us the perfect spirit and power of sacrifice.

But the limitation of those old sacrifices was that they were always merely representative and never real or effectual. How could the blood or death or sacrifice of bulls and of goats take away sin? They might stand for or typify something which could take away sin, and thus be a pledge and promise of the something that should do so. When that something appeared, it would devolve upon it to demonstrate its power to be by actually being itself the power to take away sin. And that we shall see it did.

The fact was, then, that the old priesthood which could never and did never offer the sacrifice of sinlessness or holiness or eternal life in and for itself, could never minister or impart to others the gift or grace of sacrifice which alone could take away their sins. It went on repeating and representing what, because it could never effect in itself, therefore it could never effect in others.

Just precisely, then, what the representative high priests could not do was this: They could not, for themselves or for others, perform the act, offer the sacrifice, which was necessary to at-one them with God, redeem them from sin, and raise them from death. They could not effect in themselves or in others that

completion or perfection of repentance and faith which is the death to sin and the life to God. They went on, therefore, repeating acts which were always performing because never performed; which could only mean or represent, which at best could only express their need and desire for, something as yet unaccomplished either by them or for them. Their sacrifices meant but were not either the putting or the taking away of their sins. Now on the contrary the accomplished act and the effective sacrifice of the true High Priest did do all that the representative sacrificial acts before could not do. They did abolish sin, first in the High Priest Himself actually, and then potentially in all others who should enter into and share with Him the grace and fellowship of His perfect sacrifice. The likeness or identity of the sacrificial acts of the typical and the real high priests lay in the fact that they both meant the same thing, the taking or putting away of sin both in them and in the people. The difference was that Jesus by the single consistent, lifelong, cross-completed, act of His own perfect holiness, of His own death in the flesh to sin and life in the spirit to God, accomplished and was all that they, at the best, only represented and were not.

For the law appointeth men high priests, having infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was after the law, appointeth a Son, perfected forevermore. Was it not said before that Jesus was qualified to be our high priest just by the fact of His sharing our infirmity; that He knew how to sympathize because He

was Himself compassed with infirmity? The present passage does not contradict that; it does not mean to say that our nature in our Lord was not subject to all the deficiencies and limitations to which it is subject in us; neither does it mean that He Himself in the nature was not subject to all our insufficiencies and inabilities in it. Human nature and human life were not in and of themselves sinless or holy in Jesus Christ. They were sinless or holy in Him; but they were made so by His act in them. And the gist and essence of His act which made them so consisted in the fact that it was an act performed not in the nature or in Himself but wholly and perfectly in God. He was Himself the supreme demonstration and manifestation of the fact that man attains or becomes himself not by nature nor by self but by God. And yet, in fulfilling God he fulfils himself, and in fulfilling himself he fulfils his nature. Our Lord's own act in our nature was God's act in Him, and all the sinlessness of our nature in Him was His own divine-human act in the nature.

From this it follows that the act of Jesus Christ which in His person made humanity at one with God, redeemed it from sin, and raised it from death, was an act of perfect and perfecting faith, hope, and love; because these are the faculties and functions in and through which God unites Himself with man and man with God. Our Lord's perfect holiness and perfect life were alike acts of perfect grace and faith; and, as we shall more and more see, those acts, or that act, could have assumed no other form than the one

full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the world, which is still the substance of our religion and the supreme act of our worship.

The high priests, then, having infirmity are men not only subject to the deficiencies of nature and the insufficiencies inseparable from ourselves, but who have succumbed to that infirmity and become subject in themselves to sin, or subject to sins of their own. Jesus, on the contrary, subject like them to all the infirmity of nature or of natural condition, and to all the insufficiency and weakness of any and every man in himself, did not succumb to that natural or human inability, did not become subject in Himself to sin or contract sin of His own; but, by a perfect faith, by a perfect abandonment of nature and Himself, by a perfect laying hold upon the Power not and greater than Himself, He transcended all limitations of nature and Himself, and achieved, attained divine holiness and eternal life. If He is not a man having infirmity, it is because He is one who, knowing all of man's infirmity, has used it as an argument and a means for the replacing it with all God's power and sufficiency. It is because He had all the true human consciousness that in nature alone, or of Himself alone, He were a sinner; because He had all a true human consciousness of what sin were, what in all others than Himself it was; it was because He realized in Himself, as never man did, the meaning of what He was confronted with in the possibility and daily danger of sin, in the mighty

temptation to sin, in the seeming human impossibility of not sinning.

It is not necessary that He should have Himself succumbed to death in the flesh in order that He should know the meaning of the death of the flesh. One knows the sin and the death which one has perfectly met and has perfectly overcome, better than if one had in the least been overcome by them. In fact, it is only in a perfect spiritual and moral attitude against sin, such an attitude as perfectly excludes it, that one knows all the meaning of sin as sin or of death as death. Such an attitude was that of Jesus Christ towards sin as was in itself a death to sin, and a death to that entire nature and condition of life in oneself, or life apart from God, which we call the flesh, and which is inseparable from sin.

The condition and constituent of this true high priesthood, a humanity raised above all natural or human or sinful infirmity, and raised by act of itself in God as well as by act of God in it, is to be found only in the Son perfected for ever. Not in the Son perfect always, but in the Son perfected, made or become perfect, for ever. The act or process of the perfecting or being perfected is just the point of the whole epistle: Having been perfected by so and so He becomes, etc. — is our theme. We can see clearly enough that if our true High Priest is he who realizes and expresses and mediates our perfect relationship to God, then he can be manifested only as a perfected Son. The nature of God and the nature of man alike

require that, on the one hand, the end of God should be not to be perfect Creator, or perfect Lord or Master, but perfect Father; and, on the other hand, the end or destiny of man should be to become, not perfect creature, or perfect servant, but perfect son. To inherit the divine nature as our own natural destination, to become like God by becoming in union with Him what God is, that is the only possible meaning and reason and purpose of religion.

We speak sometimes of the poet, say Shakespeare, as being the high priest of nature or of human nature. The perfect poet would be he who in himself first, and then to and in us, perfectly interprets and expresses the truth and meaning of nature and of our own nature. The perfected Son of God is High Priest of the spiritual and divine nature of all things and especially of ourselves. He reveals us all to ourselves, because He has first realized us all in Himself. He is we in all the perfection of our Godward nature and relation. We are He in the fulness of the truth of our inner, diviner, immortal selves. In Him God hath reconciled all things to Himself; all things have become one in God.

In the eighth chapter our Author enters upon what we might call the ritual or liturgical expression and exposition of our Lord's proper high-priestly function. As compared with the Levitical priesthood, He is the minister of a truer sanctuary, as also His sanctuary is that of a truer ministry. His ministry is the more excellent, by how much also He is the mediator of a

better covenant. And the covenant is better, because it is enacted upon better promises and therefore upon a better hope. These successive points we are to discuss, and if the discussion is conducted in figures or in symbols rather than in words, or in the forms of mere mental expression, it need not be the less true or the less plain on that account. What we want is to get God's truth to our minds, our hearts, and our lives, and this we can do only under the forms that best express and impress it. Visual forms may convey the truth as truly as any others, oftentimes even more really because more realistically, and not necessarily with more danger of the formality to which all forms, even the most mental, are equally liable.

I propose to follow the Apostle, and sometimes the example of the Apostle, in his own, and perhaps somewhat beyond his own, interpretations of the liturgical acts in which our Lord's high-priestly acts, and especially His perfect sacrifice, first found imperfect expression. I am not concerned very vitally with the actual exact interpretation of the ritual acts, though I should like to be able to give that too; but I am concerned about the accuracy of the spiritual truth which we endeavour to convey by their means. We have only to remember that we have the right to apply to the expression or the illustration of the truth acts or objects or events which need not have meant in themselves all the truth which we express in terms of them.

Our Author distinguishes very carefully between the actual, earthly sanctuary or tabernacle which was

the setting of the priestly functions of the sons of Levi or of Aaron, and the ideal, heavenly sanctuary of the true or real high priesthood and priestly acts. He reminds us, however, that the one was an exact, though an infinitely inadequate, copy and shadow of the other: Even as Moses was warned of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith He, that thou make all according to the pattern that was shewed thee in the mount. What was the heavenly pattern? It was assuredly not a mechanical architectural plan, a builder's or contractor's specifications. The earthly sanctuary differed more widely than that from the heavenly. The latter, as we shall see, was no scheme or arrangement of material chambers and veils, altars and arks; it was an order or ordering of spiritual relations, acts, and transactions, a divine disposition of the soul in its access to God, and of God in His meeting with the soul.

The two tabernacles or sanctuaries agreed in this, that in infinitely different degrees, with all the difference between mere meaning and being, between shadow and substance, they were both dwelling-places of the divine presence, meeting-places of God and man. It is the end alone, what the thing is when all its becoming has been completed, when it stands revealed in the perfection of all its meaning from the beginning — it is the end only that interprets things. The little tabernacle in the wilderness, whether it be read forward through all its subsequent changes, or itself was read backward from later and more developed forms, in

any case stands for that in the beginning all the truth of which finds its fulfilment and expression only in Christ in the end.

The dwelling-place of the divine presence in the midst of the sinful people; the meeting-place of God and man for the taking away of sin,—what does that mean, but the Incarnation, the At-one-ment, the Redemption, the Resurrection, Eternal Life, all that Jesus Christ stands for as the end of creation and of humanity? He is the heavenly sanctuary, the dwelling-place of the divine presence in the midst of the sinful people, in or within His sanctified people, His saints; He is the meeting-place, where God takes the sinner into Himself in His grace, and the sinner takes God into himself through his faith. All this is anticipating, but it is well to know at once that the true anti-type or archetype of the tabernacle about which we are going to speak is Jesus Christ; and that the truth of Christ is the true ordering and effecting of all eternal divine-human acts, activities, and relations. The soul and centre of this is the great high-priestly act or sacrifice, the taking away of sin on the part of God, the putting off of sin on the part of man.

We might go on in this preliminary way to say a little of the more excellent ministry, or public service, or liturgical function, to be accomplished in the truer sanctuary by the real high priest. But that is just the full matter of the chapters to come, and we had better reserve it for them. The better covenant, however, based upon the great sacrifice, and mediated by the

great High Priest, which the Apostle describes as enacted upon better promises and a surer hope, he does himself here prepare our minds for by an extended consideration, and to this we may devote the rest of this chapter.

“If that first covenant had been faultless, then would no place have been sought for a second. For finding fault with them, He saith, Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them forth out of the land of Egypt; for they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and on their heart also will I write them; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and their sins will I remember no more. In that He saith, A new covenant, He hath made the first old. But that which is becoming old and waxed aged is nigh unto vanishing away.”

There is first the fact and meaning of a covenant, and then an alternation of, a comparison and choice between, covenants. The commentaries will give at length the history and meaning of the word and the

thing, covenant. Let us look to the end and anticipate, if necessary, what must be the fulness of its meaning. The thing sought is the right footing or basis of a perfect personal human relationship with God, the true ground of man's status or standing with God. The ultimate perfect ground will be the answer of the realized sonship of man to the perfect fatherhood of God. But man's relation to God is necessarily a progressive, a progressively realized, one. However it may be a potentially born, it has to be an actually made relationship by mutual action between God and man. It undergoes evolution and growth through what in the experience of life God and man become to each other. The status between, or basis of relation, may be viewed as the result of compact or agreement between the two parties, each contributing to the common arrangement. This would be better expressed by the word *συνθήκη*. But in fact there is a growing scriptural recognition of the truth that in all human relationship with God, while there are necessarily two parties to the disposition, there is in reality only one disposer. The status between us is determined not by God and us but by God. We have necessarily a part in it, without which the status would be non-operative if not non-existent; but our part is simply and absolutely to accept God's part as our own also.

We may illustrate this by the present working of our Christian status with God. It is, let us say, a covenant of grace and faith, grace being God's part and faith our part. Now press to the very farthest

the truth that faith, so far from being a mere passivity, is the very highest and most strenuous activity of which the soul of man is capable, and the fact still remains that all that activity, in other words, that our faith itself, is but the work of the grace which is God's part, and that we only call it our own because we accept His work in us as our own work in Him. The recognition of this fact converts the *συνθήκη*, what would be a compact or co-operation between us and God, into the *δαθήκη*, wherein God is all in all, disposing our part as well as His own, and yet our part not without us, since we through the faith which He gives us make freely our own and freely work all that He works in us.

There may be more than two, but let us limit our attention to the two steps or stages of covenant relation with God which in the Old and New Testaments have marked human progress toward the final and complete at-one-ment. The covenant of law is so called because it stressed man's part in the divine-human compact. Its meaning was the necessity and the uncompromising demand for obedience or righteousness on man's part. The requirement of righteousness is simply the statement of the fact that without our own redemption, completion, and perfection we can neither be nor possess what constitutes ourselves or our blessedness. Penalty for unrighteousness is simply the necessary natural consequence of the loss or destruction of ourselves and our blessedness. If holiness and righteousness, having the spirit and working the works of

God, are life, then sin and disobedience are — they are not arbitrarily made, they simply in themselves are — death. And spiritual life and death are not only, they are very much more for good or ill than only, physical living and dying.

The covenant or stage of law, then, had for its positive function and aim the development of the spiritual and moral experience and conception of human freedom, accountability, responsibility. Its demand was for right thinking, right feeling, right willing, right acting, right being and living, righteousness. The fact that man was incapable in himself of all these, or all this, did not obviate the necessity of his having to find out that too for himself. We only know that which is the result and discovery of our own experience. The end of the law is not only to express and to demand perfection, but to produce perfection, to make perfect. Its inability to do so is not in itself but in its subjects; what it could not do was because of the weakness of our flesh, that is, because of our inability of ourselves to render it obedience.

The secondary and actual end of the law, then, was not to produce righteousness, since it could not do so; the law made nothing perfect; if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness would have been by the law. Its immediate function was by its own weakness to prepare the way for that which could give righteousness and life. It did all it could do when it convinced and convicted the world first of sin and then of the impossibility of sinlessness

in or of itself, and so prepared it for the receptivity and the divinely received efficacy of faith and grace. So the law was a schoolmaster to bring the world to Christ, as Christ was the end of the law for righteousness and life. The successive covenants or covenant stages were not contradictory of one another, but on the contrary were leading always to the same end, and the better because in each age or stage the one process stressed and expressed itself under the form of the one need of that stage.

The principle of conservatism seems to be almost the strongest of all the elements of our nature. That which has been good we do not know how to give up when its good has been accomplished and the better has come to take its place. Christ Himself came only through blood, and we have not finished learning anew what St. Paul suffered in mediating the transition from the covenant of law and failure to that of grace and realization. This is the new covenant that was to be made when the old should have accomplished its end by its failure; when in the fulness of the time the coming of the new should have been rendered possible by the finished experience of the weakness and unprofitableness of the old: "I will put my laws into their mind, and on their heart also will I write them; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." Here is a very general, and for that reason not a very definite, statement which nevertheless expresses the whole thing accomplished by Jesus Christ. Let us again go to the end of it, and having done so we shall

see that there is no meaning for the words short of the very utmost possible limit. The putting the laws into the mind and writing them on the heart has its full truth only in the incarnation of holiness, righteousness, and life in the human person of Jesus Christ. The difference between the two dispositions or dispensations is the very vital one between a law, obedience, or righteousness exacted and the same conferred or imparted, between a righteousness in us, or rather impossible in us, of ourselves or our own, and a righteousness in us, possible and actual, which is of ourselves in us because it is of God in us.

The full meaning of words is never to be found in the mere words, but only in the thing which the words only indicate and never express. There is only one word which perfectly expresses the thing, and that is the Word of God which perfectly expresses because it is identical with the Thing. Jesus Christ is the law, the obedience, the righteousness, the life which is the end of all relation with God; and He is this, not in abstract conception or statement, not in transcendental thought or idea, not in ethical legislation or legal requisition, not even as divine command or moral obligation; but — how? Why, as all the thing itself; the law, the obedience, the righteousness all realized and actual in a concrete perfect human life, in the accomplished fact of humanity in His person perfected in its personal relationship with God. There is the thing in the flesh; the law in its real place in the human mind or reason; its matter or content, love, in

its proper home and seat, the human heart; its kingdom or dominion where alone it can really be, in the human will; its whole self manifested in the spiritually visible fact of a completed and perfected human holiness, righteousness, and divine as well as human life.

The promise is not only, however, of a law, an obedience, a righteousness objectively revealed in our flesh in the actual human mind and heart and life of Jesus. The promise is to us; the mind and heart and life which are to receive and manifest it are our own. And this brings in the great truth that the Gospel of God in its entirety is not a single but a double incarnation: it is not only God's Word of Truth manifested to us objectively in the flesh of Jesus Christ; it is also God's Spirit of Life manifested in us subjectively in our own flesh, which means our own minds and hearts and lives. God in Christ is only half the truth and the mystery of the Incarnation; Christ in us is the full other half. And it means all the mind and heart and will and life, all the holiness and righteousness and divine perfection of Jesus Christ ours as well as His.

The mystery of this inclusion of ourselves in Christ and of this real incarnation of Christ in us is not denied or diminished by the claim that this most mysterious is also the most natural and the most rational of facts. That which we most know, most recognize, approve, and acknowledge, which we most desire and will and purpose, — that also will we most do and become and be. The process is absolutely the most human, real, and actual one possible. If God truly

predestinated us to be conformed to the divinely human image of His Son, that is to say, to the type of the perfect character and life revealed to us in Jesus Christ, so that He should be a new birth, a new spiritual principle, a new creative and assimilating norm in our humanity, and through us in the world, we can but feel and know, the more we have experience of the truth, that the method pursued is the absolutely natural and rational one. Let one truly know Christ and truly love Christ and all the rest will follow; he will as truly come to God and come to himself as any other effect follows any other cause.

“And I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.” In the first chapter of our Epistle the divine words are applied to our Lord, I will be to him a Father, and He shall be to me a Son. The truth to which that was seen to look forward was this: In Jesus Christ has been accomplished the divine predestination which is human destination, what our Scriptures inadequately call the adoption of sons, the supernatural natural becoming-son of humanity. So to speak, relatively to the world and ourselves, humanity became Son and God became Father in the person and by the act of Jesus Christ. The true nature and relation of each and both came to realization and fulfilment in Him. Now we have here, in this later passage, a precisely parallel expression, the self-same truth in fact, extended in its application from our Lord Himself to the larger humanity which He has also identified with Himself and made the true body of His incarna-

tion. Let us by way of illustration push the exact form of expression to the limit of its literal meaning. It is one of those forms which have been accepted as Hebraisms in our Greek text, and literally translated would read, I will be to Him unto or into a Father, and He shall be to Me into a Son; I will be to them into God, and they shall be to Me into a people: that is, I will become Father to Him, and He Son to Me; I will become God to them, and they a people to Me. There is, of course, no actual changing into, or real becoming, on the part of all the parties involved. There is no real change in God into what He was not before in Himself, but there was a relative change in what He was to the other parties through change in them in their relation to Him; the other parties being, first, humanity in Christ, and then humanity in itself in Christ. Father and son, God and people, are correlative terms and things, and the correlation depends upon the actual relation of each and both. Fatherhood to the son is realized for the son only in his sonship to the Father; God to or for the people can be or become only through the becoming a people of the people.

This is what has led me in more than one place to say that there is a true sense in which, not only creation and man, but God himself, is fulfilled, comes to the fulness of the meaning of that which most truly expresses Him, which alone truly expresses Him, only in Jesus Christ. God in Himself is complete without process, but God in the world is completed only in process, by evolution, and the end of that process or evolution

is Jesus Christ, in Whom God and the world and man are One. In the primary act by which humanity in Christ became son to God, and so God became Father, entered into and realized His fatherhood, in it; in the secondary act by which the people in Christ, through regeneration, sanctification, and glorification by His Spirit, become a people to God, and so God becomes God to His people, — in these two acts, or in this double act, was accomplished the predestination and destination of all things; God, the world, and man fulfil themselves in the completion and perfection of their mutual unity and relation. Where else is love so perfect and God so human as in the manger and upon the cross? Where else is man so divine, the creature so exalted, love so triumphant, as at the right hand of God?

“And they shall not teach every man his fellow, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest of them.” The effect of law, as law, was to separate infinitely between man and God, as far as finitude from infinity, as impotence from omnipotence, as sin from holiness, as hell from heaven. The effect of the Gospel of Christ, rightly understood, is equally, not only to emphasize in conception, but to verify to experience, the infinite nearness and oneness of God and man. The distance between law and grace, servants and sons, deism and Christian theism, the untruth and the whole truth of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, is an immeasurable one. Truly it hath not entered into the

heart of man to conceive the things that God hath prepared for us in Christ; but which who of us is prepared to receive! Who can enter into the nearness with which God is near to every one of us in Christ? What is any local or material nearness to that of the love of God in Christ, or that of the oneness of Christ with us in that closest of intimacies, the intimacy of spirit, the fellowship of the Holy Ghost?

The nearness of God to us inconceivably exceeds, indeed, that of us to Him, and yet, with all our dullness and deadness to what is ours in Him, we do not at all realize how much nearer we all are to God, how much more we know of Him through the Incarnation of His Son. An ancient commentator in Greek says in substance, that after God dwelt in the flesh on earth, and deified our nature by His assumption of it, there shone in the souls of all the light of the true God-knowledge, and, as it were, a sort of fitness was imparted to human nature by grace for the true or real knowing of God. A Jewish Rabbi, to whom the vision of Christ came, as to St. Paul, in a bright light from heaven, often said in his after experience of Christianity that habitual Christians did not know how much of spiritual knowledge there was even in little children by virtue of their having been born in Christ. And St. John writes, I write unto you, little children, not because ye know not the truth but because ye know it.

Finally the Apostle places the foundation beneath all this new covenant of grace in the words, "For I will

be merciful to their iniquities, and their sins will I remember no more." The possibility of that initial nearness to God which is the condition of our knowing Him and receiving His laws into our minds and hearts, and so of our ultimate actual oneness with Him, depends upon the divine provision by which our sins, so far from acting as a ground or reason for our infinite separation from God, are converted into reasons and means of our most intimate union and identification with Him. It is not the righteous in themselves who are the nearest to the infinitely Righteous in Himself. That would be only the external likeness and relation of two distinct righteousnesses. It is the unrighteous in themselves who can find for themselves no righteousness but in Him, and can know in themselves no righteousness but His, who can come the nearest to Him, nearer to Him than to themselves, the nearness in which themselves are lost, and yet found, in Him. The relation in Christ of God to us and of us to God enables both God and us, without sacrifice or compromise of the necessity and the ultimate actuality of our own completed and perfect righteousness, rather on the ground of the assured certainty of that, to treat our present unrighteousness, all the deep and dark fact of our present sins and sinfulness, as so far from a ground of exclusion as to be the very reason and necessity of inclusion in Him.

IX

THE SACRIFICE THAT TAKES AWAY SIN

Hebrews 9-10

Now the first covenant had ordinances of divine service and its sanctuary; and the Apostle proceeds to describe briefly the arrangement and the services of this worldly sanctuary as compared and contrasted with those of the heavenly. The description of the earthly tabernacle need go no farther than its use in the Epistle to illustrate the higher functions typified by it. We may recall these most prominent features: First the outer Court surrounding the Tabernacle, with its Brazen Laver, and great Altar of burnt offering; then the entrance through the outer Veil into the Front Tabernacle or Holy Place; in which were the Golden Candlestick with its Seven-branched Lights, the Table of Shew-bread with the Twelve Loaves, and the small Altar of Incense before the Inner Veil; then the most significant Inner Veil separating the outer from the inner sanctuary or Holy of Holies in which was the Ark of the Covenant, containing the Two Tables of Stone, Aaron's Rod that budded, and the Pot of Manna; and over the Ark the Mercy Seat where rested the Shekinah, overshadowed by the Cherubim. Now these things having been thus prepared, the priests go

in continually into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the services; but not so into the second tabernacle or Holy of Holies.

In the sanctuary as a whole there are very carefully distinguished the two parts, and so too the two sets of functions connected with them. The first service or set of services, which went on continuously, and was the regular established worship of the people for many centuries, was limited to the Court and to the Front Tabernacle or Holy Place. The second service pertained to the Holiest Place, and this was practically closed, and the function pertaining to it was in abeyance until the condition should be fulfilled which should render it possible to be enacted. The exception of the entrance of the high priest alone once a year only served to emphasize this fact; the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the Holiest Place had not yet been made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing. The first service was for the then present, and discharged such function toward God as was at the time possible; the second service was in the then future, and waited until the true and complete function toward God should be made possible which our Godward relation demands for its full and perfect expression.

Let us consider briefly some of the details of the earlier ministry and worship of the worldly sanctuary, with the view of seeing what it could and could not do, its divine significance and its human limitation. The approach through the Court by the way of the Laver

and the Altar of burnt offering, symbols or instruments of purity and of consecrated, devoted service, is sufficiently plain in its meaning to need no comment. Within the Holy Place the seven-branched Lamp, fed with consecrated oil, and ever burning before the Lord; The Table of shew-bread, with its twelve loaves from the purest fruit of the earth, ever spread before His face; the incense constantly penetrating into His innermost presence; these, too, need little additional interpretation at our hand. Let your light so shine — offer to God the mature and prepared fruit of a life acceptable to Him — let your prayers come before Him as incense, — when have these not been, and when will they ever cease to be, the natural and inevitable acts and expressions of true religion and real worship?

God, too, it has been in different ways said, wants His gifts and offerings and sacrifices at our hands. It is little that the helpless infant or little child can really give or do to the father or mother who gives and does everything to and for it. But what it can and does give is light to the eye and food to the heart and joy to the soul of the loving parent. God calls upon us as we upon Him for His daily bread. Our Lord knew; and He said, Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit. Along with the other expressions of worship in the outer parts of the sanctuary, went on also all the time the ancient forms of sacrifice; the peace-offering expressive of unbroken union and communion with God; the burnt offering, with its promise or profession of whole-hearted devoted

service or obedience; the sin-offering, for the confession of sin and its forgiveness upon repentance. We can readily see how in the old worship there were the elements of a very developed and significant transaction of the soul's business with God. If spiritually better and better understood, and more and more faithfully appropriated and applied, it would be difficult to conceive or devise a more effective religion and worship than that which God's people had received from His own hand before and in preparation for the coming of Christ. Nor may we say that the religion and worship of the Old Testament did not bear the most eminent and effective fruit. The religion that made that Hebrew people, that produced its literature, that inspired its historians, psalmists, poets, prophets, that brought the world up to Christ, and in Him to God, what too much can we say of its worth and its work?

And yet the point of our Epistle and of our argument is, alongside of the true significance of the Old Testament religion and worship, its essential insufficiency and its practical impotency and actual failure. The explanation of this will be found fully revealed only in the exposition of the essential sufficiency and the practical and actual efficiency of the true religion and worship for which its very failure prepared. But before coming to that, let us reflect a little upon the meaning of failure and success in religion. It all turns upon what or how much religion is to be expected to do for us.

To what extent, or in what sense, is it a fact that there is a growing tendency not to expect religion to do anything at all for us? By that I mean nothing at all other than what we do for ourselves with it. Of course, the getting for ourselves clearer and purer views of what God means to us, of what religion means for us, of how we may best appropriate and apply to ourselves the benefits and blessings of those truer meanings, that is doing a great deal for ourselves with our religion, and we might understand one's being quite religious, and very rationally and refinedly religious in that way. But, according to that, religion would be absolutely nothing outside of our own evolutionary mental conception and moral application of something of our own which we choose to call religion. The truest religion would be the highest evolution up to date of the thing so called. Religion would be for ever the truest hitherto meaning, the highest as yet expression of something not existent, or existent only as that meaning or that expression. In other words, religion is always only an idea or conception or sentiment of our own, never having any objective concrete existence in itself. We make it, and it is forever just so much as we have made. There is no actual absolute and complete religion.

The truth in the above view, so far as it goes, is that relatively to ourselves religion *is* only so much as we know of it and as we appropriate and use of it. Its efficacy is only its actual efficacy; it is true that it does for us only what we ourselves do for ourselves with it,

and so is to us just what we ourselves make it. This cannot be otherwise; religion cannot be something else which takes the place of ourselves. It must be that which enables us to be ourselves, and which cannot therefore but wait upon our own being so.

From the standpoint of our Epistle and of our argument, which is that of Christianity, the one-sidedness of the view we have been discussing consists in its limiting the truth of religion to the very finite degree of our own apprehension and appropriation of it, and practically making our own imperfect knowledge and use the maker, the cause instead of the incomplete effect, of it. The position on the contrary of the Epistle, and of Christianity, is to see religion not in the subjectively partial conception and attainment of men, but in the objectively complete mind and accomplishment of God. I will not pause to consider the question whether, if we are capable of a conscious, free, and understanding relation to God, that is to say, a personal relation, God is not capable of at least such a personal relation to us. We need not speak of any religious relation to God at all, if we do not mean one not only of susceptibility and obligation on our part but of influence and demand on His. And when we have admitted the fact of a divine influence and demand at all, where shall we stop as the limit of its possibilities? Is religion to stop at the good we may do ourselves with it, and admit no good that God may do to us through it? Is it to be measured and defined by what we can do and not by what He can do? The position of Christianity is that religion,

the religion of the world, of humanity, of every man, is complete, not only completely thought but completely accomplished, with God, no matter how incompletely realized or known it may be with men.

The difference and distance between Judaism, or any other relative, preparatory, or what the Apostle would call worldly or earthly religion, and the final, absolute, and divine religion, is that between the imperfectly conceived, expressed, and attained truth with men, and the absolute and complete truth eternally with God, and in time revealed by His Word and imparted in His Spirit. When, therefore, with all the truth, the beauty, and the goodness that were in it, our Apostle speaks to his compatriots of the weakness and unprofitableness of the old religion and the old worship, we can estimate and measure that weakness and unprofitableness only by the meaning of the efficacy and the power of what was to take their place. Jesus Christ is God's revelation and expression of absolute religion, the truth of humanity and of every man before God.

Whenever in this epistle the inefficacy of any partial religion is spoken of, it is expressed as an inability to complete or perfect, that is, to bring and reconcile to God, to redeem, or sanctify, or glorify, to impart holiness or righteousness or eternal life. The law perfects or completes nothing; on the contrary Jesus Christ is everywhere described in terms of humanity completed and perfected, in His relation with God, in His accomplished sonship, in everything that constitutes an absolute religion. The impossibilities of the law, whether

in its moral demands or in its ritual conveyances, were all accomplished in Him. Sin was abolished and eternal life achieved. Christ is the absolute transaction and relation between God and man, or He was nothing. To make Him only the most eminent and successful of the many tentative approaches to a God who is Himself only the highest idealization of nature and of humanity is just the contradiction of the whole position and argument before us in the Scriptures.

And so we come back now from the perfection of the result attained to that of the act or process of its perfect attainment. And we return also to the symbolism of the Tabernacle service to find illustration and expression for it. The priests went continuously into the first tabernacle, the Holy, accomplishing the services; but into the second, the Holiest or Holy of Holies, the high priest alone, once in the year, not without blood, which He offered for himself, and for the errors of the people. The whole procedure was a parable for the time then present; according to which were offered both gifts and sacrifices that could never, as touching the conscience, make the worshipper perfect, being, as they were, only carnal ordinances imposed until a time of reformation. The whole argument reaches here its crisis, the points being, first, the entrance and way into the Holiest place, and, second, that being not without blood. The two ultimate truths of religion are here, and generally in the New Testament, identified with the significant rites of the ancient worship, but the object, here and generally, is to universalize these forms or figures, not alone to

express the truths by them but to interpret them by or translate them into the truths themselves.

Let us then, for the moment, drop the figures of the Holiest Place and the Blood, and look at the truths divested of all imagery. We are to study an act, to us the central and supreme act or fact of the universe, in and by which humanity in the person of its Head brings itself and is brought to God, equally and identically at-one-s itself and is at-one-d with Him, redeems itself and is redeemed from sin, rises and is raised from death. All these are acts, or rather this in all its points of view and forms of expression is an act, at once wholly divine and wholly human. It is not that God performs one part and man another in it, but each performs the whole, God's part being accomplished only in man's, and man's only in God's. The Incarnation is at no point ever only a co-operation or co-partnership. God is everywhere all in all, and yet always to the personal fulfilment and never the extinction of ourselves. The Holiest Place is never only a place, the most exalted; it is a relation, the most complete and perfect. We might drop the local figure altogether, and the truth of an achieved, perhaps rather than a restored, oneness with God (though there is truth in the latter expression also); of an attained redemption from sin; of a realized holiness, righteousness, and life, would remain true all the same. To be brought to God, in all the spiritual meaning of being, and by all the spiritual process of becoming, near to God and one with God, is a truth that for itself needs

no material imagery; but such is our need to understand and express the invisible by the visible, the spiritual by the natural or physical, that it is not for us to despise or discard the use of the one for the ends of the other.

Oneness and at-one-ment with God, then, thing and process, end and way, is the essential matter to which we have come; and the way is by blood. There is no access to God to be completed or perfected without it. Let us drop the figure of the blood too, and see what the truth is by itself. What the Apostle wants to explain and justify is the all-importance attached in the Scriptures and in Christianity to the death of Jesus Christ. The question is whether, if there had never been in Judaism or in the world the material imagery or symbolism of blood shed or of animal sacrifice, the death of Christ would not still, in all that it meant and was in itself, have been the supremely necessary and essential thing it now is in Christianity.

Death means the ultimate, the limit, the last or end of a thing. Of course it applies only to things that are to pass away. But things that are to pass away are to pass away, and nothing short of death expresses the completeness of that act or fact. St. Paul insists that as Jesus Christ was the perfect end of the law in one sense, so he was to be the absolute end of it in the other. As He was its perfect fulfilment so He should be its complete termination. Our Lord was not only the passing but the putting away of many things, and the complete and perfect putting away. Above all

things He was the putting away of sin and death, and so of every human condition and position incompatible in themselves with the full realization of holiness and life.

That attitude of mere things, of physical sequence and mechanical necessity which we call nature or the natural, He included but perfectly transcended, and lived in a higher world of personal spirit and a living God. The attitude of mere self, of our own being or becoming ourselves, He utterly died to and passed beyond into the life neither of nor for Himself; in other words, He put off the flesh for the spirit, the natural and psychical for the spiritual man. The perfection of His life in the new could only be measured by the completeness of His death in and to the old.

But let us narrow down all these expressions to, literally, the crucial issue of human life and destiny, the issue of spiritual and moral quality and character. Everything for us turns upon ourselves and of what sort we are. Life is purely a matter of choice, of self-decision and determination; all that we ought to be is everywhere over against an all that we ought not to be. If we have to become ourselves by an all life, we can only do so by an all death. The death of Jesus Christ is His complete and perfect not being, ceasing to be, or refusing at all cost to be, and so abolishing and ending in Himself everything that our humanity needed or ought to die to and leave behind in order to the attainment of itself and its destiny. Just what makes Jesus Christ not merely one of us, but The

One, with an infinite difference of degree, is the act and fact of His death, the fact that all that He was not He was not to the limit, to the end, so that we say that He was absolutely not the natural but the spiritual man, not in the flesh but in the spirit, above all absolutely dead to sin, and absolutely alive to God. This death is absolutely the thing to be desired, the unattainable, the impossible thing for us all. There is no getting rid of any kind of evil except by overcoming, abolishing, putting it away.

Put away vice, put away sin, — how much of it? How far away? How much distance or difference is there between our puttings away and His? The utterness of Christ's putting off of sin and of death by His personal human conquest of them, by His absolute renunciation and annulling of them, that is what we mean by His death to sin. Now human meanings and ideations and imaginations of this can never rise above themselves, can never be anything more than just what they are. At best they may embody themselves in forms which we recognize as the religions of the world. The very best was the religion that, under God's special guidance and direction, moved most directly toward the whole truth of Jesus Christ. But all antecedent religions, even the best, and whatever of divine motions there were in it, were but human, earthly, worldly movements toward the divine absolute religion of which they were promises and prophecies. All bringing down of Christianity too to be only one of the many tentative religions that have attempted to scale heaven and break

their way into the infinite and the perfect is a denial or non-conception of Christ's actual death and resurrection, of the completeness with which He put off all incompleteness and imperfection and put on the holiness and righteousness and life of God himself.

The important point, I repeat, is to see in Jesus Christ Himself, apart from all prior prefiguration of Him, not only an infinite signification but an infinite realization of religion; the accomplished and attained absolute relation between God and man. His perfect death and perfect life is the complete putting off and putting away not only of all that is sinful but of all that is weak and ineffectual in human act and effort before, and the bringing in and putting on in its stead of all that is strong and profitable and holy and living. Christ's death, I repeat, is not only the annulling of sin, but the transcending and leaving behind of all impotences and impossibilities of the world, the flesh, or self. It is the knowing and having God, and the substitution of Him in the stead of all these. But now, having thus affirmed the whole truth of Christ apart from all figures and prefigurations, let us return and make use of the figures, and see if they are not real helps to the even better understanding of the truth of Christ.

The high priest before Christ could not enter into the Holy of Holies without blood; and when once in the year he entered with it, the circumstances of his doing so all indicated that his entrance was only a ritual and representative and not a real one, because

the blood only meant and was not that which actually takes away sin. The whole religion at that stage was nothing more than a sign of the truth, and mere signs are not things. That does not assert that there is no value or virtue in them. It is better for us to know what truth is, what virtue, and holiness, and righteousness, and life are, however little these in their totality may be attainable by us. At any rate to know something of them, to recognize and acknowledge our need and feel and confess our want of them, to earnestly desire and ever so faintly hope and strive for them, is a better attitude towards them and makes us better than no attitude or than any other.

How much further than this can any religion go which is only man's self-attained attitude toward the precious things of religion? Is that all that religion can ever say to us of these things? No, all the things that meant the taking away of sin were distinct promises from God of the thing that should take away sin. The blood of bulls and goats, of course, could not take away sin, but it spake of a blood that could and would, that would itself be the actual washing away or expunging of sin. The veil of separation still stood before the Holiest Place, but the annual entrance that left it still closed pointed forward to the act that should forever rend it asunder from top to bottom.

The figure is kept up of the blood of the annual entrance being always offered up for the high priest as well as the people, and the truth prefigured is the fact

that remains, that the act in and by which humanity first in itself in Christ abolished sin potentially abolished sin in all us, the people, in Him. I cannot refrain from venturing a little beyond the warrant of Scripture in interpreting the sin or sins for which that blood was shed. It was not particular, conscious or intentional, sins; it was the great unknown, undiscriminated mass of error and failure and transgression, of weakness and incompleteness and imperfection, of which our life is still and always made up. The great death was to be the death of all that. Not only our actual personal sins, but the whole world of irresistible temptation, the whole flesh of mortal weakness, of impossible obedience, of unattainable holiness or life, died in and with Him.

The services of the Tabernacle were a parable, according to which were offered up gifts and sacrifices that cannot, as touching the conscience, make the comers thereunto perfect. As pertaining to the conscience; — there was something which they could perfectly effect, and that too something not wholly in the letter but of some value in the spirit. Let us suppose the case of a worshipper who by those ritual acts really confessed his sin, and expressed his wants, and desired through them pardon and deliverance; however ineffectual the forms, however absent the provision for any actual means of relief through them, would there be no good done, no benefit conferred and received? I will not say what or how much, but at the least the ancient worshipper was reconciled with the outward

institution which he had transgressed, his status in it was restored or his standing made perfect. The blood of bulls and goats sprinkling them that had been defiled could sanctify to the cleanness of the flesh; it could effect a ceremonial cleansing which was far from useless.

But does not even so much mean a great deal more in religion? And is there not a more perfect provision for that great deal more? The ancient imperfect religion had done more than anything else in the world to develop the human consciousness and the human conscience. It had given the world sin at least if not holiness, and that was half-way toward the reception of holiness. It was the condition of the power to receive, even though it was not yet the gift. It was the creation of the want, the appetite, which are necessary to digestion and assimilation.

The spiritual and moral consciousness and conscience are, like everything else in us, subject to the laws of evolution. Begin with ever so initial a sense of God and our relation to Him, of God's law and our obligation to it, and though it be myriads of ages off, humanity will not stop short of its true conception, and can never be content to stop short of its actual attainment in Jesus Christ. He is the predestined and the destined end of the spiritual consciousness and the moral conscience of mankind.

Consciousness and conscience are the same except that the one deals with facts and truth and the other with acts and duty. How nothing else than Christ can

satisfy or perfect the consciousness or the conscience becomes at once apparent when we see how He does satisfy and perfect them. In Him we rest in the perfected and satisfied sense of accomplished relationship or oneness with God, and consequent perfect conformity to His will and obedience to His law.

But the preparatory dispensation of mere law, whether that law was expressed in moral precepts or in ritual acts, only more and more enlightened the spiritual consciousness and conscience, without supplying the necessary provision for their relief and satisfaction. Men under it only saw more and more clearly the fact of their difference and distance from God, and felt more deeply at once the necessity and the impossibility of being at one with Him. So by the law was only the knowledge of sin; the law made nothing perfect as pertaining either to the consciousness or the conscience; it only revealed separation from God and aggravated rebellion against His law. The merely provisional and significant preparatory dealing with the matter through the animal sacrifices meant much and accomplished little; they were only carnal ordinances imposed until a time of perfect straightening out and final right settlement. Such a time of reformation or restitution is generally looked forward to and alluded to in the Scriptures.

St. Paul refers to it when he says to the Athenians, The times of ignorance God overlooked; but now He commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent; inasmuch as He hath appointed a day, in the

which He will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised him from the dead. And again, St. Paul in his exposition of Jesus Christ as our redemption from sin and propitiation with God through His blood, describes a twofold setting forth of God's righteousness, first in explanation of His passing over of the sins done aforetime, in (the time of) the forbearance of God, and, second, in the demonstration at this present season of God's being not only righteous in Himself but the righteousness too of him who believes in Jesus. The argument is that God had hitherto dispensed a provisional, representative righteousness through the vicarious blood of animals and other such types and signs, but that now He dispenses an actual and real righteousness through the blood of Jesus.

“But Christ, having come a high priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation, nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, entered in once for all into the Holiest place, having obtained eternal redemption.” The truth of the divine figure will perhaps be brought out best by a now more detailed exposition of the greater and more perfect tabernacle, after which the hand-built, humanly-constructed one was patterned. The true heavenly tabernacle is, by common consent, what we call the Body of Christ, meaning by that His entire humanity, the whole truth

of the Incarnation. Of course we shall enlarge this to mean not only His natural body or individual humanity but His mystical body, the Church or whole body of redeemed humanity included in Him. But first and for the present let us limit our attention to Himself and what was accomplished in Him.

The entire tabernacle symbolized Christ, the Holy as well as the Holiest place, and the functions proper to them both. Jesus Christ took our flesh and blood as well as we become partakers of His. He assumed our natural humanity as we are taken up into and assimilated to His spiritual humanity. There was in Him as in us the natural as well as the spiritual man, the flesh as well as the spirit. He shared all our deficiencies and insufficiencies, all our natural weaknesses and impossibilities. He needed to be at-one-d with God, redeemed from sin, raised from death, completed and perfected in holiness, righteousness, and life, just as we, and in the same way and by the same means. The salvation which like us He needed was not from sins of His own like ours, but from a condition and from conditions otherwise identical with ours. From these He could be saved only by faith, by prayer, by grace, above all by that perfect attitude and relation of God to human salvation, and that perfect provision of God for human salvation which are revealed and given to us all in Him. He needed not Himself, humanly, to be saved from sins of His own, because His perfect salvation consisted only in His not having such sins, through His own perfect

conquest and abolition of sin in Himself. It was not that He did not have by His very humanity to meet sin, nor that He was not sorely tempted by sin; He was only not tempted by His own sins, and, in that sense, by sin within Himself; in every other way He was tempted like as we are. It was not that either His nature or Himself in the nature was efficient or sufficient against the sin; neither the will of the flesh nor the will of man was in Him more than in others able to save Him from the sin of the flesh. He was saved by prayer and supplication, with strong crying and tears, to Him who was able to save Him, by the right laying hold upon and holding to Him who was higher than He and was His only salvation.

In Jesus Christ, I repeat, there was all the natural man as well as all the spiritual man; and just the perfect lesson and meaning of His human life was the interrelation and interaction of these two, the natural transition from the one to the other, the perfect gradual dying in the one in order to the perfect living in the other. The natural is not sinful in itself, it is only insufficient for sinlessness or for holiness in itself. It has not to be died to or discarded for anything in itself; it has to be died to or transcended for something not in, or beyond, itself. In order to realize ourselves we have to pass out of and die to both nature and ourselves and to fulfil God in ourselves; but in fulfilling Him we are fulfilling them. All this means that in Jesus Christ as in us there was the one issue upon which all humanity turns,

the dual possibility, the one choice between alternatives. The issue and choice at bottom is not between good and bad, virtue and vice, sin and holiness; it is between God and self. The man who abides in nature and trusts to himself has no choice, in effect. I do not mean to say that men in themselves, or, as we say, in nature, may not differ widely, morally, and even spiritually. The spiritual and moral consciousness and conscience is not wanting in them, and they stand in all possible kinds and degrees of attitude and relation to it. But the fact remains that the higher and truer the development of the spiritual consciousness, only the more certainly does the man know that in himself, and within the resources of nature, there is no escape for him from sin.

The issue, then, is not between sin and holiness, it is between ourselves and God. To be only in ourselves is the flesh, to be in God for holiness and life is the spirit. The choice between these two is the issue upon which ourselves and our destinies turn, by the decision of which they are forever determined. When we speak of this spiritual and moral issue we speak not of something incidental or accidental in us, but of that which conditions our freedom and creates and constitutes our personality, or, in other words, ourselves. To think of our Lord as not possessing, or not positively to think of Him as possessing, this freedom of choice, as subject to this issue and as having to decide it as we do, is to think of Him as lacking the essential and the distinction of humanity; it is to rob His human life of all its meaning and truth.

X

THE BLOOD OF THE NEW COVENANT

Hebrews 9-10

As the whole tabernacle typified our Lord's humanity; because, as we shall see, it represents humanity in general, in its twofold constitution and relation of flesh and spirit; so the outer tabernacle, the Holy, with its functions, represented His natural manhood, or the flesh; while the inner tabernacle, the Holiest Place with its appointments and services, represented His spiritual manhood, or what in general we call the spirit.

Our nature is in itself not only physical but rational, moral, and, potentially at least, even spiritual. We are constituted for relations not only with the world of sense but with the higher world of spirit. There is such a thing, then, as natural religion, and less and less are we disposed to say that God is not, less or more, in all sincere natural religions. Especially do we recognize His presence and positive part in that highest of human religions that issued in Christianity. We have seen how all the ministries and services which terminated in the Holy place were most significantly expressive of true religion. Nevertheless all those services are represented as of the flesh, of the world.

However God might, in a sense, meet them, accept them, set up a provisional status of relations based upon them, that is, based upon all that it was possible for man in himself to do for himself in his Godward relation, still there was every indication that that religion, as every human religion, was a mere tentative, relative, provisional thing, at best a finite human preparation for and reaching forward to meet what on the contrary must be an absolute divine provision and supply.

Thus the Holy place in the tabernacle stood for the highest in the natural life and religion of man, and yet that highest still separated from God by a closed veil, an impassable chasm. The thing confronted at the end of every approach, at the close of every service, was the fact that the way into the Holy of Holies was not yet opened. There was something even in Jesus Christ, in His natural humanity, in His human self, between Himself and God. He shared our infirmity, our deficiency, our insufficiency, He was subject to the condition upon which alone we can come to God. That condition is nothing short of the absolute and complete one of dying in our mere nature, dying to ourselves, in order to live to God. In order to die to sin, He too must die to nature and to self, and dying to them He died to it. The transition from sin to holiness, from death to life, is involved in that from the flesh to the spirit, and the remainder of our argument is to show that that passage cannot be made without blood, or otherwise than through death. The reason and the details of this will appear as we proceed.

But let us turn back for a moment for a brief anticipatory glance at the symbolism of the Holiest place as meaning the spiritual or the spirit in our Lord in contrast with the flesh. The Holiest place was the place of the actual presence of God, of the meeting of God and man, of the great At-one-ment. The Mercy-seat which represented all this was the Lid or Covering of the Ark. The Ark of the Covenant, the new covenant of the perfected relation between God and man, had for its content the Tables of Stone or Book of the Law, but accompanied by two other expressive signs of the fact that the obedience or righteousness of the true covenant was to be that not of nature but of grace, not of the flesh but of the spirit, not of the will or works of man but of the Spirit and power of God. Aaron's Rod that budded and the Pot of Manna signified the birth and the life from above which were to be the source and the nourishment of the New Righteousness. But the way into the new life and the new service was to be only through the Death that was died on Calvary. When we think of Jesus and construe Him to ourselves, we think of the perfectly realized spiritual man, the humanity of God's presence, of the accomplished oneness of God and man, of the completed righteousness and life born of God and fed from heaven. And the Cherubim overshadowing the Mercy-seat, are they not the Angels of God peering down and desiring to look into these great mysteries of love and grace and salvation?

We take up, then, our parable again and interpret

it as it goes. Christ the true high priest or perfect representative of humanity, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle of His Body, of His Flesh, of His Human Life, through the work wrought by Him, actually in our nature and potentially in ourselves; not through the blood of bulls and calves, but through His own blood, that is, through the offering of His own life to God, through His own death to sin and life to God; entered in once for all into the Holiest place, that is to say, brought humanity into God through bringing God into humanity, and so accomplished the great reconciliation, the great redemption, the great resurrection and regeneration of the world. There is something significant in the turn of expression when the Apostle describes Jesus as thus entering into the Holiest place, into the perfected divine-human relationship, having obtained, literally having found for Himself, or for humanity in His person, eternal redemption.

I have often spoken of the entire equality of truth and propriety with which our Lord is spoken of in terms of God and in terms of man. It is as man that in that supreme act of human faith, obedience, death to all but God and His will, His law, His righteousness, Jesus Christ found for Himself and for humanity the one eternal redemption and salvation possible for it. "For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ"—and here comes in the best expression of the spiritual meaning and value of that blood ✓

— “Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” Here was the perfect act of the eternal Spirit wrought through man: here was the perfect act of man wrought in the power of the eternal Spirit; here was the perfected spiritual manhood, wrought through the perfect death to self and so to sin, and the perfect life to God and so to holiness and righteousness. How shall not that act, that offering, cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God? For what is that act, let us ask ourselves yet once more? It is the act of God becoming, become, our righteousness, our life; it is the act of ourselves becoming, become, righteous, dying from sin and living to holiness in God. We have only to know Christ in ourselves and ourselves in Christ in order to die the death which is life to God and live the life which is death to sin. Not only in our present Apostle but in every interpreter of the Gospel in the New Testament, in St. Paul, St. Peter, St. John, we have that rich experience of the actual cleansing of the conscience, of the very consciousness, of sin through participation in the perfect death, the perfect life out of death of Jesus Christ.

We have to go yet deeper into the question of the necessity and the efficacy of that blood. “For this cause He is the mediator of a new covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the

eternal inheritance.” We must remember that the very end and function of the former covenant, being one of law, was to develop the fact of transgressions, and with it the sense of sin. A spiritual consciousness trained under it would know to the utmost not only the sin of evil works but the deadness and impossibility of good works. Under the law as a schoolmaster, one learns not only the evil of doing bad but the impossibility of doing good; one comes to long for redemption not alone from sinful works but from dead works, to feel the necessity of death not only from the sins he commits in the flesh but from the flesh itself in which he cannot but commit sin.

But in the new covenant, not of law but of grace, the needed death has taken place for the redemption of, or for redemption from, the transgressions that were under the first covenant. We have the death from the flesh which is the only death from sin. We are dead from ourselves in whom there is not only the actuality of sinfulness but the impossibility of sinlessness, and alive in Him in whom there is not only the impossibility of sin but the attained act and activity of holiness. By reason of this death having taken place for us and taking place in us, we who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance: which means, the promise of eternal righteousness and life.

There enters into the argument at this point a distinction which may not concern us now so much as it did those for whom the Epistle was immediately

written. It may be enough for us to know that a thing is necessary in and for itself; it was all-important for them to know that it was necessary according to the Scriptures of which their entire spiritual consciousness was the product and creation. So when our Author adds, For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it, the question arises, why, or wherein lies, the necessity? The main stress of the answer given in the Epistle goes to prove that in all the course of God's dealing with His people as recorded in the Scriptures, covenant relation with God is always based upon constructive death; and then the further question arises, what does that mean in the nature and working of things in themselves?

Let us first consider the historical statement and fact. A covenant carries with it of necessity the death of him that made it. A covenant is of force only upon or for the dead. It never avails while he that made it lives. That this is the meaning of the Apostle's position and argument will appear sufficiently from its further statement and illustration. Wherefore, says he, even the first covenant was not dedicated without blood. For when all arrangements had been made for the dedication of the first covenant and tabernacle, Moses took the blood of the calves and the goats and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, this is the blood of the covenant which God commanded to youward. Moreover the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry he sprinkled in like manner with the blood. And according to the law, I may

almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission. The blood thus necessary to the covenant, or the death necessitated by it, is that of the offerer. Of course the worshipper did not actually and literally die in the act of his covenant relation with God, but he did so constructively, under the form or figure of the victim whose death represented his own.

I have again and again asserted the principle of defining a thing by its more perfect end, rather than by its imperfect beginnings, by its drift and movement towards fuller meanings rather than by its undeveloped earlier poverty of meaning. What religion meant and was on the way to express by its sacrifices was the denial of some things and the affirmation of others, the ultimate complete death of some things and so possible complete life of other things, in the subjects of the religion. What the something to put off, to die to, and the something to be put on, or to live to, were, was matter of evolutionary realization and expression; and God and man alike at last revealed it in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The supposed difficulty in the way of the above manifestly true interpretation lies in the question as to who is the maker of the covenant whose death is of necessity involved in it. It is very true that ordinarily the making or giving of the covenant is represented not as the conjoint act of the two parties but as the act of one alone, namely God. God alone, then, could be the maker of the covenant; and the declaration that the

covenant carries with it the death of him that made it, that it is not of force while he that made it liveth, has been made in some way to refer to the deep and mysterious truth of the death of God for the sins of the world, what St. Paul means when he speaks of the Church of God which He purchased with His blood. What truth there is in those deep sayings we shall be far from passing over; but the death here spoken of as necessarily involved in the covenant with God is the death not of God but of the sinner. That the sinner himself could not die to himself and his sin but for the love and sympathy and fellowship of God who suffers and dies with him in every such act of death, who supremely suffered and died with and for him in the absolute act of human redemption or death to sin, we cannot make too much of. But we have to remember that the necessity and propriety of the death to sin lay in man not God, and that God's own participation in it lay in the act and fact of His making Himself one with us in it, and so becoming Himself our reconciliation, redemption, resurrection, and eternal life.

We have now to prove that the language of our Epistle does not immediately or necessarily mean God as the maker of the covenant, whose death is involved, but the sinner who enters into living and saving covenant with God. If we will turn in our Septuagint version to the Fiftieth psalm of our Psalter (the Fortyninth of that), we shall see where God says, Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. Turning to the refer-

ences in your Revised version of this passage, you will see more fully than I have been able to indicate how true it is that all covenants with God in the Old Testament were by blood or by sacrifice, were made, as it were, over dead bodies. In the passage quoted the makers of the covenant are the offerers or worshippers, the sinners whose own death to sin is expressed by the blood or death of the offerings. The Greek terms in the psalm and in the Epistle are practically identical.

Not only is our interpretation required by the entire context of our Epistle and of the Scriptures in general, but it alone brings the point of view of the Author into perfect harmony with those of all the other New Testament interpreters of the Gospel. According to St. Paul, only he who has died is justified or freed from sin. Christ's death was the death to sin and the new life to God. We shall share it with Him: only as we have ourselves suffered and died with Him shall we rise from the dead and live with Him. That shall be consummated and completed only when we have died in the body too and lived again; but even now we may realize it in its completeness in faith if not yet in fact, we may account ourselves already as dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. And again he says, that we have been released or discharged from the law, from all the conditions of the former covenant, from its weaknesses, convictions, guilt, and penalties, — how? Why, by the fact of having in Christ died in that wherein we were subject

to it, that is, in the flesh or in ourselves; so that we serve now in newness of the spirit, and not in oldness of the letter.

So St. Peter too describes our Lord as having brought us to God, brought God into us and us into God, by His having died, or been put to death in the flesh and raised or made alive in the spirit. And upon that he exhorts us as follows, Forasmuch then as Christ suffered, or died, in the flesh, arm ye yourselves also with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that ye no longer should live in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

And St. John not only tells us of the blood of Jesus as cleansing us from all sin, and speaks of Himself as being our propitiation or at-one-ment with God as regards sin, but describes Him, as we have quoted, as having been manifested to take away sin, as having done so in Himself in whom is no sin, and as doing so in us in whom in Him there is no sin. Just as St. Paul again had said, that God sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin had condemned and abolished sin in the flesh in His person, so that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who now, by His death and life, live and walk no longer in the flesh but in the spirit. All these quotations show that there is a common mind in all the interpreters of the Gospel in the New Testament as to the necessity and the meaning of the death or blood of Christ, and that the aim of our Epistle is to justify and

illustrate that meaning out of the entire preparatory teaching of the old Testament.

To return to the words of the Epistle, It was necessary, therefore, that the copies of the things in the heavens should be cleansed with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us: nor yet that He should offer Himself often; — but now once at the end of the ages hath He been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment; so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for Him unto salvation.

These latter words go a little more into detail at least as regards the imagery of the act of sacrifice, which we might describe as the distinction between the *prosphora* and the *anaphora*. The former is simply the direct offering to God. As applied to our Lord it means the act of giving Himself to God, the complete devotion and surrender of His life, as represented by the offering up of the blood. The thing beneath the figure is the completeness of our Lord's sinlessness or holiness, the perfection of His obedience or righteousness, the victory of His life to God through death to sin; all which was expressed in the act of His, through the eternal Spirit, offering Himself without spot to God.

This was the *prospora*, but the *anaphora* carried some further details. Literally it was the taking up of the offering or the victim and laying it upon the altar. Applied to our Lord there was the figure of His taking something upon Himself, lifting it up to the altar of His cross and nailing it there to die. Sometimes that something is expressed simply as our sins, sometimes as the whole body of the flesh, sometimes as our entire selves in the flesh, apart from God and subject to the law of sin and death. It is difficult to say just how and how far our Lord is described, in taking us upon Himself, as having taken not only our nature, our life, and all our natural conditions, but also our sins. The answer is perhaps best reached by asking ourselves what it was that died in Him, or to what it was that He Himself died. Assuredly through all His life, and unto death, our Lord resisted, denied, mortified, crucified something. And what He so denied, annulled, and abolished, He was in that relation to, which not only enabled but demanded and necessitated His denial, to the limit of its abolishing and His own dying to it.

The fact is, holiness for us can have no other meaning and can come by no other process than the having to meet sin in our environment and in ourselves and having to overcome it. I do not mean that the sin has necessarily to be in ourselves, but it has necessarily to be met in ourselves, as much in order to its not being as to its being there. Jesus was humanly without sin only because He met and overcame and

abolished sin in Himself. His very having to overcome it, or having it to overcome, presupposed a relation to it on our behalf which is not inaptly expressed by His having taken our sin, having been made sin for us, having come in the likeness of the flesh of sin. If in our behalf He took our sin, He took it only to take it away; He took it not to be sinful with it, but to be sinless against it, by condemning and abolishing it, to put it to death in Himself by Himself dying to it.

I do not know how better to express the truth of the matter than to say, in what seems to me to be the explicit teaching of our Epistle, and of the New Testament generally, that our Lord's whole relation to sin in our behalf was identical with our own up to the point of His unique and exceptional personal action with reference to it. Left to our nature and ourselves it overcomes and slays all us; through God in Him He overcame and slew it. He did it not by His own will and power as man, but as man through an absolute dependence upon God. And He made both the omnipotent grace of God upon which He depended, and His own absolute dependence upon it, His perfect faith, available for us in our salvation. He re-enacts in us the victory over sin and death which was first enacted in Himself.

Inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment; so Christ also, having been once offered, or offered Himself, to bear the sins of many — to take upon Himself their sins, their sinful natures, their sinful selves, and lift and nail them to His cross and leave them there forever crucified, dead,

and buried, — having done this, He shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for Him, unto salvation. The vision and prophecy is of redeemed humanity, first in Jesus Christ and then in itself, dead through His cross to sin, to the weak and sinning flesh, to its sinful self, and alive forevermore to God and holiness and the life indeed.

There is one other distinction it may be proper and profitable to touch upon. The sufferings and death of Christ are described sometimes as passive, sometimes as active. It is a passive death for sin of all that ought to die in us; it is an active death from sin of all that ought to live in us, and that can live only in and through the death of all that ought to die. Our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin; we died in that wherein we were under the law and were subject to sin and death; that is a passive death, the death of all the self in us that needs to die either as sin in itself or as the condition and cause in us of weakness and sin. “The death that He died He died unto sin once; Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus”; that is an active death, a death which is the highest activity and the most living life of our most real selves. The issue between the two men, the two possible selves in us, is the one question of our lives and destinies; only one can survive and endure, and it can survive only through the death of the other.

The Apostle continues and somewhat repeats this

important part of his argument, with new or additional touches which we may not pass over. The law, he resumes, having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things, they can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect them that draw nigh. Else would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshippers, having been once cleansed, would have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance made of sins year by year. For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins.

Then begins the final stripping off of figures and imagery, and the translation of the facts into the language of plain spiritual experience: Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body didst Thou prepare for me; in whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hadst no pleasure: Then said I, Lo, I am come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do Thy will, O God. The sacrifices of the law are all brought into contrast with the Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second. By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth day by day ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, the which can never take away sins: but He, when He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth

expecting till His enemies be made the footstool of His feet. For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. A body didst Thou prepare me; Lo, I am come to do Thy will, O God; By the which will we have been sanctified: in these three statements we have the enduring facts of our redemption through Christ.

In The body Thou hast prepared me the Apostle means to express the entire truth and instrumentality of the Incarnation. It includes both the natural body of our Lord's own human organism and constitution on earth, the instrument of His divine work in and for humanity, and the larger and all-inclusive mystical body, the Church, the whole body of the humanity redeemed in Him as its head. Our Lord's whole function in creation, in creation both natural and spiritual, in the world and in the Church, is regarded as pre-determined and prepared from the beginning. The natural exists but for the spiritual, as in the individual man the body is but the organ of the soul, matter is only the instrument of spirit, all natural means are for spiritual ends.

All creation is God's predestined tabernacle or temple, the body or organ of His manifold life and activities. If as world it is the instrument and scene of what we might call His more physical powers and mechanical operations, and natural presence; as Church, too, it is to be the scene and sphere of His more personal presence and spiritual operations and relations. In Adam, or in the highest reach and attain-

ment of man as product of nature, we see God still only as immanent creative wisdom, power, unity, constancy, law; in Christ we see Him as no longer in mere natural operation or mechanical sequence, but, as we may say, in Himself, in personal presence, in spiritual quality, character, and action. The relation of God and man in Adam is an immanental one, with a growing instinct toward, a latent developing potentiality of personal relationship, that is to say, of objective, transcendental interrelation.

The end of all natural religions is the evolution of this inherent potentiality or natural capacity for real or personal relationship with God. What Christianity sees and accepts in Christ is not another and the highest hitherto self-reaching of humanity toward God, but the answer of God Himself to that human longing and expectation, God's actual supply in the fulness of the time, and man's complete satisfaction of his most spiritual want. The figure of the tabernacle or the temple all through the process of creation is not an inapt one; its consummate form in Jesus Christ, as God's final and highest self-realization and expression — we might say increation and incarnation — of Himself in His works, is just that than which, once we have apprehended it, it is as impossible to conceive of any other, as it is not to conceive of it as the only, end and destination of the universe. A body indeed had God prepared for Him who was to embody God in all things, who was to be God Himself in all things, in whom God was to come supremely to Himself in all things. For in Him love

was to fulfil itself in an act which was to be not only God's absolute gift of Himself to the world, but no less, by His grace in it, the world's supreme gift of itself to God.

Lo, I am come to do Thy will, O God. No one can read the Gospels in earnest without perceiving the very definite conception which our Lord shows all the way through of a will of God which He was come into the world to accomplish, and the very tremendous responsibility and importance which He attaches to the accomplishing of that will. The will of God which it was His meat and drink to do, in doing which He surrendered all will of His own in that only true sacrifice of making God's will all His own, glad thus to drink the bitter cup He drank, and to be baptized with the baptism of blood He was baptized withal; that will of God was with Him no vague and general passive acquiescence in, or discharge of, God's will; it was a definite sense of something supreme and final to be done in Him and by Him for man, for the world, for God. How better could that something be either conceived, executed, or expressed, than in the act of His life by which God, the world, and man were made one in a real and an eternal reconciliation, all sin, separation, and discord abolished, all evil annulled in good, all death swallowed up in life?

By which will we have been sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. The body of Jesus Christ Himself, in which and through which the offering was made possible, was, we have seen, the

entire constitution of Himself in our humanity, wherein and whereby He could perfectly represent us in all our Godward relation, and do for us all that it is necessary for us to do for ourselves, and be in ourselves, for life and salvation. The greater body of Jesus Christ, we have seen too, is the body of us all in Him, the body in which He unites Himself with us in and through our uniting ourselves with Him, and by His Spirit in us works and becomes in us all that He wrought and became in Himself. This is that perfecting of the saints which is the building up of the body of Christ, till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. Our Lord having Himself wrought our redemption, sits at the right hand of God; expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. That is to say, from thence He carries on in us the work which on earth He accomplished in Himself; He awaits the putting His enemies under the feet of His Church, as already of Himself; the end and consummation shall be His glorification in His saints, the redemption of the body of His Church.

There is only one more point of emphasis to complete the picture; and that is the strong contrast and at the same time conjunction of the absolute completeness of our work of sanctification as wrought in Christ and its incompleteness as working in ourselves. By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are being sanctified. The practical application of this whole Gospel of salvation, which will be the subject

of our next chapter, lies in the right apprehension and use of that contrast. The point is, that our salvation is as accomplished and complete in faith as it is incomplete and to be accomplished in fact, that is to say, it is as completed in Christ as it is incomplete and to be completed in ourselves. There is in the action of divine grace operating through our faith such a putting of God's laws in our hearts and writing them upon our minds as constitutes in us a present realization, assurance, and possession of future perfection. Where the indissoluble connection of ourselves with Christ is truly apprehended and appropriated, there to God and to faith nothing stands between. Our sins and our iniquities have no more existence in the mind and memory of Him who has blotted them out for ever. We are already where Christ is and what Christ is.

XI

THE FAITH THAT INHERITS ETERNAL LIFE

Hebrews 11-12

THE remainder of our Epistle is all application and illustration of the fundamental principles we have been developing. Let us sum it up, to begin with, in a short re-statement of the argument and its conclusion: Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by the way which He dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having a great priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our body washed with pure water: let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not; for He is faithful that promised. The general theme of this closing section of our subject will be faith, the faith which can now come to God without one external obstacle or one internal qualm between itself and Him. The faith to which the at-one-ment is not complete, the redemption finished, the participation of eternal life perfect, is not a faith which answers wholly to God's fulness of assurance to it in Christ.

The first point in connection with this faith is the objective ground of its absolute certitude. In the divine covenant with us God's part is as fixed and determined as Himself; in Him there can be no variability nor shadow of turning. What is God's part? It is all that has been actually accomplished for us in Christ. Words could not possibly express more exactly and more utterly than is done in this Epistle the completeness and the eternal irrevocableness and unchangeableness of God's part in the covenant of grace. The whole wealth of the richest of languages is at the disposal of Christianity to express how fully, in the eternal and consummated will of God, we have been and are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all: how by one offering Jesus Christ has perfected for ever those who, already sanctified in Him by grace, are being sanctified in themselves through faith. The effort and object of the Apostle now is to make us see and feel the awful meaning and consequence of our refusal or failure to be actually what God has already completely made us virtually or potentially. For nothing stands between us and all that He is but our acceptance and appropriation. How would I, says God, and ye will not!

Let us recall how heavily this thought has been on the mind and heart of the Apostle all the way through his argument: How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation? We are become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our con-

fidence stedfast unto the end. His body are we, His house, God's tabernacle and temple, if we hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end. Remember the promised Rest of God, and those who entered not in because of unbelief. Harden not your heart as in the provocation. Having a great high priest, let us hold fast our confession. Think of the fate of those who were once enlightened and have fallen away, seeing they crucify the Son of God afresh and put Him to an open shame. All this gathering, accumulated sense of the meaning and consequence of the rejection of Christ pours itself out as an avalanche at the close of his argument: If we sin wilfully after we have received a knowledge of the truth, what remaineth? A man that set at nought Moses' law died without compassion: of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know Him that said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense. And, again, The Lord shall judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

We may say what we please of the anthropomorphism of God's wrath or vengeance; translate it into terms of those natural consequences of our sins, negligences, and neglects with which we ought to be well enough acquainted as facts of experience, and I do not know

that there would be much gained in the way of softening or tempering. All the temperings of natural consequences or penalty to which we may trust must come along the lines of grace. There is all the tempering possible provided in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. To refuse or neglect that is to cut ourselves off from all possibility and therefore from all hope of mercy.

I have spoken of the objective concrete ground of faith in God and hope for ourselves which we have in the completeness and unchangeableness of what God has already done for us in Christ. The essence of that we have seen, and see here again, to consist in the new and living way which Jesus has opened for us through His flesh, that is to say, through His death in the flesh to all its limitations, and His life in the spirit in all its illimitations. The figure comes in again of a rending of all veil of separation between man and God. The blood is coincident with that rending: it is only through the rent veil, it is only with blood, that we can pass from ourselves into God. Life in God cannot be accomplished save through death in ourselves. Every veil between us and God, everything that separates between us and God, must be rent, though the rending be with blood. These reiterated figures and truths are but commonplaces to us so long as we deal with them only as figures or even only as true ideas. It is only as accomplished facts for us and potential accomplishable facts in us that they have the interest and importance attached to them here. We are dealing with a real, absolute, and objectively if not

yet for us subjectively accomplished, religion. The Apostle's words are to him counters not of thought but of fact. In Jesus Christ all is rent asunder with blood that separates between us and God. We are at one with God and free from sin — in faith; but faith in God means fact in us.

We might here illustrate in a few representative points the absolute transition accomplished for us and to be accomplished by us in Christ, and that in terms of our own spiritual processes and laws of growth and change. I recall an old distinction between not so much two forms as two stages, the first and the last, of human freedom. Personality begins with what has been called formal freedom, the power and opportunity and necessity of moral choice. The choice and decision between good and bad, right and wrong, must be our own, and have been made by ourselves. The possibility of either must have at some time been ours. That must have been the beginning of freedom; what is its proper end? Acts become habits, and habits become character, and character when made becomes fixed, indelible destiny. The natural end of formal freedom is fixity of character and destiny, the loss of freedom — in that sense. But suppose the fixity has been on the right side, in good; as one becomes more and more fixed in good, the limit of which is the loss of the very *posse peccare*, is he becoming less and less free? On the contrary he is more and more progressing in real freedom, and he is perfectly free, has attained the limit of real freedom, only when he has surrendered

all formal freedom, and so passed beyond the reach and possibility of anything which may impair the completeness and perfection of his being or action. That end may be never so far off for us, but though it be infinitely far, he who does not believe in it and aim at it as the end does not know truly the beginning of the life of God.

Let us take another illustration. All philosophy as well as all religion is obliged to get down to some ultimate spiritual and moral distinction of good and bad, virtue and vice, or sin and holiness. Let us take the last mentioned, and at once we recognize in ourselves a mixed attitude towards the two alternatives. We have, however, no doubt as to what our attitude ought to be and more and more we endeavour to assume it. We know that our attitude ought to be wholly against sin and wholly for holiness and righteousness and life. The totality of the disposition or attitude toward sin we call repentance, and of that toward holiness and God we call faith. Now as one truly knows more and more of the real attitudes toward these mutual contradictories, let one attempt to set a limit to the attitudes, and say how far repentance shall go and how far faith. Will it be possible to stop short of a repentance unto the death of sin, or of faith unto the very perfection of the holiness and life of God? We cannot stop half-way on the way to God; we cannot stop short of the absolute religion. From the very beginning we must believe in and mean it all, though it take us an eternity to know it all and attain it.

Let us take yet another phase of the matter. God's religion is an absolute religion. It means utter oneness with Himself, utter freedom from sin, utter life out of death. We cannot but know that this means the rest of eternity for us, and how much of experience between, none can tell. Now however long, and however anything else, between us and our destiny, God knows that the power in us to attain our end must come through our own faith in it and our assurance of it. Man can himself do only that which he knows as an end to himself; he will do perfectly for himself only that which he has not only a perfect knowledge of, but a perfect love and desire for, and a perfect faith and hope in. What man wants for his perfect salvation is a perfect faith, hope, and love in and for God as His perfect salvation. God as His perfect salvation can only mean God to him and God in him as his own perfect holiness, righteousness, and life. And that means God's absolute truth of Him and us in Christ, and Christ's absolute fulfilment of Him and us by the power of the Holy Ghost. Now when we begin to talk of this faith in God, this faith in His love, His grace, His fellowship or oneness with us, how far shall we go or where shall we stop? Was God in Christ, is Christ in us? Is He in us for anything less than He is in Himself or means for us? All these perfect tenses — do they not mean something, and ought we not to affirm their meaning to its very limit. Ought we not to say that God has accomplished our salvation, and that it is accomplished? Ought we not to speak in the terms

of the perfect faith of St. Paul, of the Writer of our Epistle, of all the New Testament interpreters of Christ and His work, and say that we are dead, and are risen; that we are justified, sanctified, glorified; that we have been completed and perfected in Him who is to us from God our own holiness and righteousness and life? To be able to say that in the beginning in faith is God's method of imparting to us the ability to say it in the end in fact. When the faith is in God's Word and Spirit, truly to believe is in reality to be.

That Christianity was intended in the beginning to be pitched upon this highest note of perfect faith is further illustrated by the language that follows. We have the ever opened way into the Holiest place and the great High priest over the house of God. We may say that our Lord's present and permanent function there, stripped of imagery, is to stand to God and to faith for God's accomplished part in the economy of grace, in the covenant of life, and for man's, in Him accomplished, in us accomplishing, part in the same. If God's grace is to accomplish itself in and through our faith, then the object of our faith must be ever before our eyes in order that the grace of it may be ever in our hearts. And this principle determines what our proper act of worship should be, as well as wherein our true religion consists. Having the way forever opened and the High Priest ever present, let us, the Apostle continues, draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled

from an evil conscience, and our body washed with pure water.

There is evidently an allusion to the existent and established fact of an outward institution of Christianity and a sacramental union with Christ. The Church is the true continuation of Christ and the proper body of His incarnation. As the Tabernacle had been, so the Church was sprinkled with the blood of His perfect sacrifice; it was baptized into His death and raised up into His life. The sacramental act was a word of God, and was all that it meant. One half of modern Christianity can no longer understand what the sacraments were to the Church in the beginning; that is because it no longer understands what the Church itself was. The Church as the body of Christ, the temple of the Holy Ghost, the house of God which we are, in participation with Christ, was as much an objective entity and reality as Christ Himself was in His human actuality.

The Church was Christ as Christ was the Church. The Incarnation was in humanity, not only in a man. The One High Priest, Forerunner, Firstborn, Author and Finisher was but God's promise, fulfilment, revelation of all. The one act of faith was to see oneself and all mankind in Christ. The language of faith was to predicate Christ of oneself as of all. The sacraments were God's creative word of real transactions, real relations, and real resulting life. One was baptized into Christ's death and life and into no mere picture of it. One ate and drank the life of Christ,

and no mere sign of it. The language of faith was the language of fact, not of fiction; of realities, not meanings. To the man who so believes, what he believes is, provided his faith rests upon a real word of God. God's word through such a faith makes what it says, enables and produces what it commands, fulfils what it promises, gives and is all that it means or expresses.

The reason and excuse for the modern world's surrender and loss of so much of the language, and along with it the reality, of faith in an objective real life and salvation is not far to seek, and must be fully reckoned with. It sprang out of the inevitable danger, and the well-nigh universal result and fact of a practical divorce between the truths of an objective salvation in Christ and a subjective salvation in ourselves. Practically the value of the death for us, all but obscured the necessity of the death in us and of us. The substitution of the righteousness instead of our own, displaced the need of the righteousness of our own. The supreme act of Christ which atoned, or made amends, or satisfied the requirements of justice, for all we had done amiss or left undone, was virtually separated from that same act as, not only in Christ but in us too, actually abolishing sin or separation and at-one-ing us with God.

There is a truth of justification and a truth of sanctification and a logical and practical distinction to be made between the two, but if they twain are not one in our theology and in our experience, neither

is of any avail. If Christ's righteousness is never our righteousness it can do us no good; if Christ's death is not actually our death too in Him, we can know nothing of Christ's life as our own. But the yet greater danger and evil was, not alone putting Christ instead of us in place of making Him us, but no less the putting the Church and its sacraments instead of Christ and us, in place of making them in reality both Christ and us.

At any rate Christianity in its inception, with a true *eulabeia*, a right laying hold with both hands, bids us alike to hold fast the objective, the absolute, the eternally accomplished in our salvation, the whole truth and living reality of Christ, the Church, the sacraments, and at the same time to remember that one and all these are truths for us only as they are and are to be truths in us, and that all the life of God in us is nothing except as it is all our own freedom, all our own selves, all our own activity and life in God.

The Apostle passes to some reminiscences of past experiences in common in Christianity, which had done much, evidently, to shake the faith he is striving to restore and confirm. Call to remembrance, he says, the former days, in which, after ye were enlightened, ye endured a great conflict of sufferings; partly, being made a gazing stock both by reproachings and afflictions; and partly becoming partakers with them that were so used. For ye both suffered in sympathy with those that were in bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your possessions, knowing that ye yourselves have a

better possession and an abiding one. Cast not away, therefore, your boldness, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise. It is perfectly evident throughout the New Testament that all the absolute and unqualified claims and promises in Christ hold out no shadow of hope of any miraculous or preternatural exemption from any of the ills or difficulties or trials of our natural existence. On the contrary, all the helps, comforts, promises, and blessings of grace are conditioned upon our conduct under the circumstances of our natural life as it is. The Lord our salvation took life as He found it, and was saved in it and through it and by it, and not from it.

The manifold trials and troubles of life have to be met and dealt with after their kind; natural things are to be treated with natural methods and means. The salvation of the Gospel is a salvation not in kind, or in the same kind, but in another kind. And the difference in kind, which we are now to develop at some length, is indicated in advance in the words before us. Ye took, says the Apostle, joyfully the spoiling of your possessions, knowing that ye yourselves have a better possession and an abiding one. What is the better possession, both in connection and in contrast with the others? There are three ways in which we may translate the words: Ye yourselves have a better possession; which may mean, Ye have in yourselves a better, etc.; or (after Bishop Westcott),

Ye had your own selves for a better possession and an abiding one.

What was the contrast that our Lord had in mind when He asked what it would profit us to gain the whole world and lose our own soul? Or again when He warns His disciples that they shall be hated of all for His name, but that nevertheless they should possess their souls in patience? As here, too, our Apostle adds the warning, Ye have need of patience, that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise. The promise is of a possession of another kind from any which the world can either give or take away. It is something wholly within ourselves as regards the world, and yet something to be won by us only in reaction and contrast with the world, as victory over the world. I have elsewhere brought together the classic and the Christian identical conceptions, first, that happiness is a pure energy of the soul, or of the self, existing only in our own actions and reactions; and, second, that the kingdom of God is within us, that it is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. The life above the world is not independent of the life in and of the world, in so far as it can be known and lived only in reaction and contrast with it, or as victory over it.

This does not mean that the spiritual is necessarily and wholly at enmity with the natural as such. The natural exists for the reaction with and victory over it of the spiritual, and is best fulfilled in being overcome and superseded. We do not hesitate to

see that the past best serves itself and us in proportion as it is the more effectually superseded by the present and the future. It becomes an enemy and a tyrant when it maintains its domination and stifles change from itself and progress to new and better things. The world is a very necessary factor in human life and destiny, but it is here to be overcome and transcended. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a Gospel of pure transcendence, of absolute victory over the world, it is that better and enduring possession which is consistent with, which is mainly through, the loss of all mere earthly possession. The earth and all that is in it exists for the lives, the souls, the selves that are lived on it, that are made by it, that overcome, surmount, and survive it; surmount and survive it not only hereafter, but here and now.

That having done the will of God ye may receive the promise. I am come, said our Lord, to do Thy will; by which will we are sanctified; and then, That we having done the will of God may receive the promise. Observe the circle of cause and effect: His obedience is not to be instead of our obedience, but is to be our obedience. Because it is only at last our own participation in the divine perfection that can constitute God's perfect promise and gift to us in Jesus Christ. There is just one thing more to be remembered from elsewhere, from everywhere else in the Gospel, lest the promise be interpreted as only the saving, the perfecting of ourselves as against the world. We are to remember that we overcome the world, we save ourselves by as well

as from the world, only by, in the right sense, loving the world, serving and giving up ourselves for it to the very limit of life and extreme of death. Ourselves are indeed our highest possible promise and reward, but ourselves are to be found and won never in ourselves alone but only in the infinite not-ourselves which saves us from our own wretched finitude into the infinity of God's blessedness.

Faithful is He that promised. Yet a very little while, He that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry. But my righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrink back, my soul hath no pleasure in him. But we are not of them that shrink back unto perdition, but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul. All that has been said about faith is but an introduction to a fuller interpretation and illustration of its meaning and nature and function as the divine power of overcoming the world and coming to God. In the great panorama of faith which follows we are to expect more of poetic description than of scientific analysis and definition; but what of the latter too is involved will merit our attention.

There is first the general truth that faith is the universal function and exercise of religion, or of the spiritual nature and activity of man. The history of religion is the story of faith. The spiritual heroes of the world were the men of faith, and those names stand out supreme as the makers of the history and the determiners of the destiny of mankind, who in the most perfect service were the most superior to

the world, and lived the most completely the life that is above it.

The end and object of faith is specifically life. It is an organ not so much of science as of action. The hero of faith is an interpreter of life and destiny rather than of nature or of things. All but one of our illustrations will be found to be exploits and achievements of personal action and activity. But the one exception, which is the first illustration as well as in itself the first act of faith, is an ontological judgment, an insight or intuition into the very root and being of things, which is the presupposition and condition of all subsequent faith: By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which do appear. There is no more exact statement than these words in their original Greek of the distinction in reality between the visible or the phenomenal and the noumenal or the intuited.

Beneath or behind the things that are seen and are temporal there is an Eternal Unseen. What is it? What is the real *substans* or *hypostasis* underneath the being and order of the universe? The immediate and universal answer of religion is, The Word of God. If that answer is not true, there is no object or function of faith, and no religion. Suppose it to be true, and that not only is the Word of God as the reality of things the true objective matter of faith, but that faith is the true subjective apprehension and possession of that objective reality; it will be seen at once that there

are two questions involved; one is a question of objective fact or reality, the other is one of subjective intuition or knowledge. Which is prior and determines the other; does the fact without us in some mysterious way produce the intuition of it within us; or is the intuition itself the proper prius and reality, with nothing outside of universal mind or reason to have determined it? These questions of realism or idealism I simply refer to, in order rather to illustrate than to explain or define the action of faith. The Apostle calls faith the evidence or proof of things unseen and the substance or the assurance of things hoped for. Now with regard to one at least of these terms there is the well-known ambiguity of meaning.

Does *hypostasis* mean the objective substance or reality of things, or our subjective assurance or knowledge of those same things; is it a term of ontology or of epistemology? I ask simply to bring out this fact, that whatever in science or in philosophy, in physics or in metaphysics, may be the true relation between subject and object, between knowledge and reality, in the divine and absolute religion of Jesus Christ faith and fact are treated as having been made one, as being now identical. Faith is not only the assurance or certainty of its object; it is the present possession, the very substance and reality of its object, though that object be by nature and of necessity something absent and future. Faith knows that the complex and mysterious universe is the divine expression and ordering of God; faith knows that the

Person of Jesus Christ is God's Word of truth and life; faith knows itself completed and perfected in Him whom it recognizes and acknowledges as its own author and finisher; humanity accepts its own reason, meaning and destiny, its divine predestination and inheritance, in its High Priest and Forerunner within the veil. Assurance is substance, faith is fact, promise is fulfillment, hope is possession and fruition, — all not so much through any inexplicable virtue in faith itself, *fide sola*, as because faith is the simple laying hold of and uniting itself with that Word of God which is at once the substance of all reality and the light of all truth.

However faith must, as we have seen, have a philosophic or ontological basis and start, its sphere is in action and life, and there we shall proceed to find its true expressions. The heroes of faith have been the conquerors of the world, and we have now to look into the meaning and method of that conquest. Let us undertake to interpret no farther than to see in the instances given types and expressions of different phases and actions of faith.

Abel is the first recorded type of those who make covenant with God through sacrifice, and between him and that great final sacrificial act of faith which abolished sin and established the kingdom of righteousness and life there is an unbroken line of witness to the truth of a principle which is the wisdom of God and the hope of man. This principle, without going into the details of the illustrations, we are to abstract from

all the instances, and develop to its final supreme expression in Christianity. That which is common to every great act of faith is that it lays hold upon some word of God and holds it against the world; through it it transcends or overcomes the world, and inherits a promise of something above and beyond the world. The doer of such an act makes himself greater than the world, and though he lose it, in doing so he finds, or gains, or makes himself.

The word of God to which the man attaches or allies himself comes in all its more or less imperfect instances in a variety of finite forms. One foresees some judgment which it is laid upon him to avert or else to survive; or some great hope or promise which through him is to be fulfilled; or some great redemption which is to be wrought; or some truth to be proclaimed, or right to be maintained. And he does it for the world as against the world; and, in it against the world, in the interest of the world against itself, in losing himself for the world, he is, in fact though not in thought or intention, saving himself both by and from the world. Whereas to have gone with the world, against itself, would have been to be lost with it and by it.

So Noah, unable to avert the universal judgment he foresaw, was yet enabled, with a few, to survive it and be the beginning of a new life and the repeopling of a new earth. Thus Abraham, made the bearer of a promise which in an endless future was to be the great final and predestined blessing of the world,

forsook all for that, and lived for it as the father of all them who to the end of time have known it by faith, and shall inherit it in fact. To these pioneers and progenitors of faith the end was far from visible to sight. They were the true wise men who saw the star in the east, ages before it came and stood over the place where the Young Child was.

So Abraham, being called, went forth not knowing whither he went. Being come to the place which he was to receive for an inheritance, he became a sojourner in the land promised him, as in a land not his own, dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. The promise through him to the world depending upon an heir, he was left without heir until beyond the time of the natural possibility of his begetting or Sarah's conceiving a son. The son having nevertheless been given, Abraham, when tried, offered up Isaac: yea he that had gladly received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; even he to whom it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God is able to raise up, even from the dead; from whence he did also in a parable receive him back. Isaac and Jacob were heirs of the promise and continuers of the faith of Abraham. Joseph, at the summit of position and power in Egypt, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave commandment concerning his bones. Moses, grown up in the King's house, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to be evil entreated with the people

of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.

In these, and the other illustrations of faith, the common, the permanent, the universal elements are the following. For an ideal some will say, or for a principle, — we prefer to say, in obedience to a word of God, a word of truth or law or promise — men have been found willing and able to give up the world and all that is in it. But not only so; there was something yet rarer and harder that went before: they were able to apprehend the idea as an idea, to recognize the principle as a principle, to hear and accept the word of God as a word of God, against the blindness and the rejection and the contradiction, as well as to hold it, to live by it and die for it, against all the excommunications and excisions of the world.

Yet more, the heroes of faith did not go, as dumb driven cattle, to renunciations and endurances and deeds and achievements that were against their will or their grain or even their pleasure. They found in the will of God, when hardest and most painful, the very highest recompense and reward; they accounted the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of the world. They endured as seeing Him that is invisible, and they were making actual experience for themselves of the fact that the things that are seen are

temporal and mixed, but the things that are not seen are eternal and pure.

But the essential feature or fact in all this long story of faith is not simply the truth that it is faith whose story we are learning, but it is the yet deeper truth that it is the trials of faith, its pains and disappointments and failures and deaths, that make faith, and are the sources of its chief virtue and real triumph. Our Author does indeed enumerate a glorious list of earthly and visible successes and achievements of faith; he reminds us of those who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, waxed mighty in war, turned to flight armies of aliens; women received their dead as by a resurrection. But, apart from the fact that even these were in no small part spiritual and not natural or temporal victories, or were such only as faith and not flesh would value, there is another side of the picture which is much more in keeping with the real nature and earthly fortunes of faith. But, continues the narrative, on the other hand, there were others who were tortured, or beaten to death, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword: they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, evil entreated (of whom the world was not

worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves, and the holes of the earth. And these all, having had witness borne to them through their faith, received not the promise.

Let us think again of that better resurrection which some have preferred to all earthly exemptions and deliverances. As I have elsewhere described it, there are salvations in and with and through, or by means of, the very extremest trials of faith, with which are not to be compared any temporal deliverances from them. There is a grace in drinking the cup to its dregs which cannot come to us through any merciful passing away or putting aside of it. There is a regeneration in being baptized with the baptism wherewith Christ was baptized, which nothing short of the actual dying His death can work in us. There is a grace that is sufficient for us, a power made perfect in our weakness, which we could not know to the uttermost if all thorns were extracted from our flesh. God spared not His only begotten, His one perfect Son. He was perfect only through being perfected; and He was perfected only through not being spared. To be spared the perfect process of a perfect faith is to be left short of that perfection of faith which is its own only fruition and exceeding great reward.

So these all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen and greeted them from afar, and making it manifest that they are seeking a kingdom, a country, a city, not of this world, not built with hands, eternal in the heavens. And let me insist again that

the world of invisible attainments and rewards is not one of space or time, of place or duration, of here or elsewhere, now or hereafter. It is a world of relations fulfilled, self or selves realized, the perfect will performed, the perfect purpose and end accomplished. God wants not ours but us; not all that we have accomplished or amassed in the world, but what through all our activities in and with the world we have done for one another and made out of ourselves. To have gained the whole world, to have hindered or not to have helped one another, and to have lost our own souls, ourselves, — what will it profit us? There *is* something, an attainment, a possession, a reward, an eternal life, which one may lay hold upon and hold fast here, and which no one truly does until he is willing and able to sacrifice everything else for it.

XII

CONCLUSION

Hebrews 11-12

AND now we come to the question raised by the closing words of this great epic of faith. And these all, the world's witnesses and martyrs of faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect. The world since the Garden of Eden, since the birth of our race, has been the subject of promise. Man is a creature of hope, of expectation, of aspirations and longings always far transcending any actual satisfactions, of faiths that infinitely overleap sight, of hopes that wonderfully survive death. There is an object and an end of all these, and the question is, what is the truth, the substance, the reality of human faith and hope? We call it faith, because we are convinced that there is an objective, absolute, and infinite reality corresponding to ourselves and answering to our want, upon which we are dependent for our being and our completeness. We call it hope, because our conviction is not only of the infinite object of ourselves upon which we depend, but of our own finite predestination to that object and ultimate completion and satisfaction in it.

The question, what is the burden and content of Old Testament promise, is practically identical with that other, what is the divine end of human faith and hope? The faith of the Old Testament is diffused and indefinite; it rested for the most part upon temporal objects and ends, and when these were recognized as being only signs and pledges of things less immediate and visible, the truer and remoter remained still in shadow, and only continued to lure faith yet further on to things yet more future and still invisible. Looking back from the end upon the long process of the origin and growth of faith, we can see that the meaning and purpose of God was definitely at work long before the end was clearly definable by man.

The interpretation of the process in our Epistle is original and independent of that of St. Paul, and even in some respects in contrast, though never in contradiction, with it; and yet at the close it falls into identity not only of thought but of language with it. St. Paul's end of human action, completion and perfection of human activity, condition and hope of human happiness or blessedness, is expressed in the word *righteousness*. Of course that is the Old Testament word for right relations with God, and Habakkuk's famous phrase, The righteous shall live by faith, may have been used before in Rabbinic teaching to express the essence of the divine law; but here the Author of our Epistle, either from or in common with St. Paul, adopts it as his text in his exposition of the ultimate end of Old Testament law and promise. Not only

does he close his argument and begin his application with the direct quotation, *My righteous one shall live by faith*, but he describes Abel as having, through the faith of his more excellent sacrifice, been borne witness to that he was righteous; and Noah as having, in his turn, become heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

And yet the righteousness of or by faith is not here precisely that of St. Paul; or rather, I should be disposed to say, it is the more identical with it because it is the same thing looked at quite differently, or from a different point of view. Faith here is regarded as the source and principle of an actual righteousness in man. These exponents of faith were in fact righteous, so far as their righteousness went. Faith *is* righteousness; not only the condition or instrument of it, but itself. Faith is always in God, and God is always in faith, as the life and the righteousness of it and of him who exercises it. Just so far as a man believes, God is in him, and just so far as God is in him he is righteous; and just so far as the righteousness of faith and of God really exists, it manifests itself in the spirit and in acts of sacrifice. Sacrifice is the inevitable expression of love and service, and these three, love, service, sacrifice, are the nature of God, the new creation of Christ, the promise and gift of the eternal Spirit, the blessingness and the blessedness of man. Consequently our Author, looking upon righteousness more as an infused and actual quality or character, a participation in the divine nature, does not like St.

Paul, or later interpreters of St. Paul, distinguish it, in the sense of justification, from sanctification, or from real redemption, completion, or perfection. All these we have in Christ, as accomplished in Him, but as no less real however infinitely less perfect in ourselves too in Him.

St. Paul, I contend, is not at variance but in accord with the view which sees in the righteousness of God something actual not only in Him or in Christ but in us so far as through faith we have appropriated and made it our own. But, wishing to comfort, confirm, and assure the weakest and furthest off as well as humble the strongest and the nearest in this infinite task of a perfect righteousness, he dwells predominantly upon the side, not only of how absolutely our righteousness is of God and not of ourselves, but how absolutely, being of God, it is assured of ourselves. This, says he, is the cause wherefore righteousness is of grace through faith, that the promise may be sure to those to whom it would be not only not sure but impossible if it were to be of themselves. Faith is our acceptance of the certitude of God's grace. Just because our righteousness is God's and not our own, therefore it is to be viewed as our own in the certainty and completeness of God's gift of it in Christ, and not in the incompleteness and uncertainty of our reception of it in ourselves.

In reality, however, the promise of the Old Testament and the gift of the New are those of an actual righteousness, only imputed rather than imparted because imputation is the divine method of impartation.

We can only be ever righteous in act and fact by being first so in idea, in sentiment or affection, in desire and will, in a word, in faith, hope, and purpose. Righteousness must be a gift certified to faith, attainable to hope, to be accomplished in our own activity, before it can come as a realization in ourselves. It is as an object of faith only that it can become a fact of possession. Now what the actual gift of the New Testament adds to the growing promise of the Old, which was as a light shining more and more unto the perfect day, was as follows: In the first place there was the clear and explicit revelation or manifestation of what was the promise of the Old Testament. 'The Gospel was in every sense the end of the Law for righteousness. Righteousness is the end of both law and Gospel because it is the end of man. It may be defined as right being through right action, right action through right will or freedom, right willing through right thinking and right feeling. What is lacking in this to human completion or perfection? As to its process or mode of becoming, as a matter of fact righteousness originates only over against and in conflict with its opposite. It exists only as an act of at-one-ment with God — meaning for the present simply all that God is, truth, order or beauty, love or goodness, etc. — redemption from sin, resurrection from death.

Righteousness, then, is the full and accomplished end of self or of ourselves, and it is none the less so because it is in losing or transcending ourselves, in including God and the universe in ourselves, that

we find our end. It is true that it is in proportion as we go out of and beyond ourselves in the purpose that we find or gain ourselves in the result, but it is equally true that we really give ourselves to anything other than ourselves only when we take that other, though it be God, into ourselves and make it our own. We magnify ourselves through what we thus include in ourselves, and there is nothing so little as the selfishness to which itself is all itself. We have seen how a man may gain the whole world and lose himself, his soul; and we have seen not only that a man may lose the whole world and still find himself, but, more than that, how it is only in and through the losing that there is the true finding. He who supremely found Himself and found us all is He who the most supremely lost in order to find. What in that last moment upon the cross, when even the Father had withdrawn Himself, was left to Jesus but the one thing which He was least seeking, Himself, His divine-human act of self-renunciation, the death to sin, the life to God which perfected Him and which alone perfects us?

What then, first, the New Testament adds to the Old is the clearer manifestation of righteousness as the end of divine promise, the matter or substance of divine fulfilment and gift, because the only true content and constituent of human good, perfection, or blessedness. But Christ is more than a revelation to us, of God and ourselves, or our perfect relation. He is not only the truth; but the power, of God and our-

selves, and the relation between. Faith is not itself without its correlative grace.

I have repeatedly called attention to what we may call the reasonableness and naturalness of the operations of grace; how it appeals to and makes use of and fulfils itself through all the familiar elements and faculties of our nature, intelligence, affection, desire, will, and activities, so that the actions of grace are all equally the actions of ourselves acting rationally and naturally. But, for all that, there is an objective reality in grace itself and apart from ourselves. Jesus Christ acted the most rationally, the most naturally, the most humanly of all men who have lived. He was the very divine revelation to us of ourselves. But there was something in the human acting of Jesus that was more than His human self. There was not only the highest faith in Him, but in and with that faith there was the truest presence and operation of God, there was the most real activity of the eternal Spirit, whose part in us we call grace.

When we say that in Jesus Christ the Life was manifested, we mean our life, such as it is only there revealed to us in all its truth, its meaning, its possibilities, its fulfilment and completeness. No one will say that it is less rational or natural in Him than in us, in whom reason is mainly emphasized by our violations, and nature by our transgressions of it. But the life of Christ is a perfect human because it is a perfectly divine life. And it was divine through no mere divine ideal of His own, though that too, but through an

actual presence and power of One whom He as carefully distinguishes from Himself as He identifies with Himself. He seeks not Himself, He does nothing of Himself: His Father works, and He works, the same work; He and His Father are one. In a word, the more, the greater or better thing, which was the meaning only of all the promise of the Old Testament, and is the gift or actualized reality of the New, is God Himself our accomplished righteousness and life in Jesus Christ, in whom grace bestows and faith accepts and receives all God's part in us as finished and complete; but finished and complete not as a substitute for our part, but as the all-sufficient potency and assured certainty of our part. Jesus Christ, as I have frequently said, in true substance, in however barbarous phrase, is to us both *gratia gratians* and *gratia gratiata*, both God and ourselves in our salvation; He is both the divine Word conveying righteousness and life to us and the divine Spirit receiving and assimilating righteousness and life in us.

There remains a chapter of yet more direct and immediate application to ourselves of the story and lesson of faith. In the august company of this great cloud of its witnesses and martyrs, what is incumbent upon us? It is only he who truly sees and really values the end of life as faith sees and values it, who is either willing or able to strip himself of the encumbrances that impede, and above all to rend from himself, though it be with blood, the encompassing sin that neutralizes and defeats his pursuit of it. The great need and

qualification for the race, next after the faith that sees clearly the goal, is the patience or endurance to undergo the effort of the way and to survive the pain of the process. This we are to do, and can do, only by looking away; not only by looking away from all impossibilities or pains of the world or the flesh to those who have in any measure overcome the world and sacrificed the flesh, but by looking away now from these imperfect victors too, to the world overcome indeed, the flesh crucified, victory once for all and forever accomplished for us and assured in us. The interest in this comparison and contrast lies in the manner in which Jesus is first identified with the great succession of the heroes and victors of faith; and then is distinguished from them as its consummate leader and perfect finisher or completer.

First, as to the identification of our Lord with ourselves as the representative of the faith which relates us to God, the fact may be recalled that when our Lord was described as, in the days of His flesh, calling with strong crying and tears upon Him that was able to save Him from death, He was heard from precisely that *eulabeia* or godly fear which moved Noah when warned of impending judgment to prepare an ark to the saving of his house. It would be an easy matter to prove how uniformly the real victory and accomplishment of our Lord's life is expressed in terms of human action and attainment, as again, for example, when He is said by His perfect offering of Himself to have found — manifestly for

Himself first, or for humanity in Himself — perfect redemption.

But then on the other hand how unique a place in the genesis and history of human faith does Jesus occupy! In a sense He is its originator as well as its consummator, its beginning as well as its end. He may be said to be the incarnation of an eternal principle of faith, the author of all the faith that preceded and culminated in His own, as well as of all that succeeded and was but the extension of and participation in His own. We are saved by the faith of Jesus in a double way, not only by our faith in Jesus but by the faith of Jesus in us. But the perfection of human faith in Jesus, as the perfection of human salvation, because the perfection of human relation to God, and therefore the perfection of human holiness, righteousness, and life, involves something more, and something perfectly complementary. The perfect subjective relation and correspondence of man with God is nothing but empty idea or sentiment, if it cannot, and does not, not only postulate but certify and verify the more than equal objective relation and correspondence of God with man. Our relation is a personal one, in all that personal relation means for us; His relation cannot be anything less, and must include all that ours is. When our Lord, speaking humanly, said of the Father, and the things of God and the spirit, I speak that I do know, and testify that I have seen, there must be some warrant in our own imperfect experience of faith to justify our acceptance of

the testimony of His perfect faith. In His perfect light let us see the light, and know the truth.

The evident point of the perfect faith of Jesus centres in the fact of His perfect patience or endurance. The connection is better traced in the Greek, the same word there being divided into the two words by us, patience and endurance. With endurance, that is the emphatic thought, we are to run the race; looking unto Jesus, the author and consummator of faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God. And then begins a treatise upon the meaning, the uses, the divine methods and rewards of that perfect form and expression of faith, perfect patience or endurance.

A practical application may, as it does here, embody for us the whole and exact pith and point of a long theoretical construction. The patience or endurance, the necessity of which is so urged as the conclusion of the whole matter upon the readers of this Epistle, is just the logical or natural form in which alone it is possible for a true faith to express or prove itself. Could there be faith without temptation, or could an existing faith take any other form than an endurance and survival of temptation? St. James says, Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life. St. Paul says that, if in the enjoyment of present grace we rejoice in the hope of future glory, then must we rejoice also in tribulations; for these are the conditions

and instruments of all the glory that shall be revealed in us. Tribulation worketh patience or endurance, and this is the basis or ground of all approval, hope, or attainment. But the passage before us gives us the most scientific as well as practical account of the grace of endurance. After speaking of the need and urging the practice of it for ourselves, and enforcing it by the perfect example of our Lord, it states definitely the reason and end of endurance — Ye endure for chastening or discipline — and then dwells upon the discipline of life. Let us consider the endurance of Jesus, and its lesson for ourselves.

Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross and despised the shame; — What is the sufficient motive-power of a perfect endurance? I agree with Aristotle, as against Kant, that the highest and most prevailing motive is that of pleasure, happiness, or blessedness, rather than that of mere even duty without these. Nothing is done perfectly until it is done with joy. Pleasure in its truest sense perfects every function. God is not law or duty, but love and blessedness. Without love enough to make it joyous there is no perfect service nor sacrifice. The ancients asked, Is courage a pleasure, when it can exist only under conditions of danger, doubt, and pain? And the answer was, that if it had not the inherent pleasure of a perfect moral function, it was not the genuine virtue. There was the consummate joy of perfect moral and spiritual action, attainment, life, in the supremest temptations and trials of Jesus

Christ. We must not exclude the personal joy of His own perfection and blessedness. God did highly exalt *Him*, and gave Him the name that is above every name. He was anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows. And it was through the virtue of His own endurance; He was perfected not merely instrumentally by the things He suffered, but actually by His suffering, His bearing or enduring, of the things.

Nor need we be disturbed at the thought of a personal joy in His own salvation or perfection. Such joy, in proportion as it is true, cannot be individual or selfish. The joy of truth cannot lie in its individual possession. One cannot think of the enthusiasm of Newton's discovery as a possession and pleasure confined to himself. What was it for him, if it was not for the world? Truth, beauty, goodness are infinite personal possessions too, but they are all so in the degree in which they are shared, and are impossible or valueless as only one's own. There is a marvellous gain in the restoration we find in the Revised Version, Consider Him that hath endured such contradiction or gainsaying of sinners, not against Him, but against themselves. The holiness, the righteousness, the eternal life which our Lord had achieved was His own; but, O, to Him how little was it, how much was it not, His own! To have been the Truth, and have the truth that He was denied; to have created righteousness, and have the righteousness rejected; to have been all Love and Goodness realized and manifested, and to be met with hate and requited with evil! The

contradiction, the gainsaying of sinners against themselves, against their own souls, was what Jesus had to endure, — why? Because He was their true Self, — all the reason and the meaning and the justification, all the truth and the beauty and the goodness or good of themselves. Himself alone was not the true self of Jesus; He included all selves in Himself, and suffers, and is crucified and put to shame, or lives anew, rejoices, and is glorified in the whole body and in every member of the humanity that is Himself and His own.

We are to consider Him who so endured, lest we wax weary or faint in our souls. His endurance must be ours too, through our patient endurance of the same sufferings. Grace is not deliverance from the necessity of endurance, it is the power of joyous endurance: My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations. My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art reproved of Him; for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. It is for chastening that ye endure; God dealeth with you as with sons: for what son is there whom his father chasteneth not? Instead of chasten let us say discipline or train. The good and ill to us of all things are not in the things but in us and in what we are through them. The so-called evils that are the conditions and the means of all that is great and good and blessed in us, how then can they be called evils at all? They may be falsely so called, or they may in themselves be really so. Sin need not be not-sin, because

only by its resisting and overcoming can holiness exist for us; because, therefore, as the necessary condition and means of our real good, it becomes or is made as much a good to those who resist and overcome as it is an evil, or all evil, to those who submit and are enslaved by it. Indeed holiness is only holiness if sin is sin; there is no spiritual or moral good, if there is no spiritual evil. And it is not a contradiction, or even a paradox, to say that whatever things are in themselves, to them that love God, knowing what God is, and that enter into His eternal purpose, all things, even sins and devils, are relative goods, being made to work together for good to them.

The final point of all then is, that as God spared not His own Son; abated not one jot or tittle of all that He had to endure, because it was the perfect endurance that perfectly exalted Him; He was made perfect, not so much by the things He suffered, as by the act of suffering them, by the perfect victory of His endurance; so no son can be spared aught of all that he is called to suffer without just so much reduction of what he is called to receive. The call to endure and to do is the call, and the measure of the call, to be; and our only real and abiding possession and enjoyment is in what we are. We had the fathers of our flesh to chasten and discipline us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they verily, for a few days, chastened us as seemed good to them, as *seemed* to them good for us; but He for our profit, as He *knows*

to be good for us, that we may be partakers of His holiness. That is the end of it all, and the end is the meaning and the reason of things. We become ourselves through relation, for or against, with all that is not ourselves, through interrelation and interaction with all that we call our environment, through conjunction with the good, disjunction from the bad. If the process were not connected with and dependent upon all effort, all pain, all purpose and perseverance and endurance on our part, there would be not all of us in it; and it is just the all of us in it that it is all for.

All chastening, the Apostle continues, seemeth for the present to be not joyous, but grievous: yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness. That does not contradict what we have had to say of the inherent and essential joy of the highest endurance, which is the completest survival, which is the most perfect life. Our Lord endured for a joy that was set before Him; but was not the joy that lay before Him a joy that was also present with Him? All joy is in a sense future; it is in the act of attaining something to be attained, and it must have been in the attaining in order to be in the having attained.

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